



Nova Southeastern University  
**NSUWorks**

Department of Conflict Resolution Studies Theses  
and Dissertations

CAHSS Theses and Dissertations

1-1-2017

# Exploring Identity and Negotiation among Women Military Interrogators through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

James Dorough-Lewis

Nova Southeastern University, [jamesdoroughjr@hotmail.com](mailto:jamesdoroughjr@hotmail.com)

This document is a product of extensive research conducted at the Nova Southeastern University [College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences](#). For more information on research and degree programs at the NSU College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, please click [here](#).

Follow this and additional works at: [https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss\\_dcar\\_etd](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dcar_etd)

 Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

## Share Feedback About This Item

### NSUWorks Citation

James Dorough-Lewis. 2017. *Exploring Identity and Negotiation among Women Military Interrogators through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. Doctoral dissertation. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences – Department of Conflict Resolution Studies. (55)  
[https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss\\_dcar\\_etd/55](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dcar_etd/55).

This Dissertation is brought to you by the CAHSS Theses and Dissertations at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Department of Conflict Resolution Studies Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact [nsuworks@nova.edu](mailto:nsuworks@nova.edu).

Exploring Identity and Negotiation among Women Military Interrogators through  
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

by

James Dorrough-Lewis, Jr.

A Dissertation Presented to the  
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University  
2016

Copyright © by

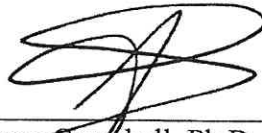
James Dorough-Lewis, Jr.  
December 2016

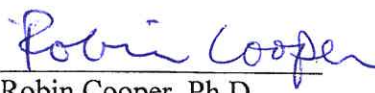
**Nova Southeastern University**  
**College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences**

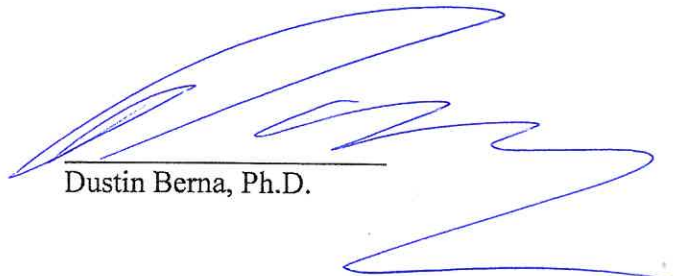
This dissertation was submitted by James Dorrough-Lewis, Jr. under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

**Approved:**

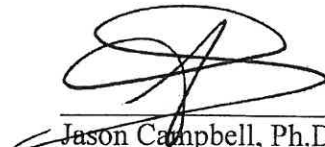
December 9, 2016  
Date of Defense

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Campbell, Ph.D.  
Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Cooper, Ph.D.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dustin Berna, Ph.D.

2/27/17  
Date of Final Approval

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Campbell, Ph.D.  
Chair

## Dedication

I dedicate this research to Ruby and Mary, who so often remind me of the talent, intelligence, and sheer grit of those who struggle to keep the world upright and spinning. I hope whatever comes from the efforts presented here, it contributes to a greater dialogue that ultimately increases the quality of your opportunities. I am proud of whom you have already become, and I look forward to seeing how you continue to negotiate your own identities.

## Acknowledgments

It is with the greatest respect and admiration that I acknowledge the women who agreed to participate in this study, and the many others whom they represent. You deployed to combat for a job the very mention of which raises eyebrows, if not tempers, and you did it during one of the most traumatic periods of the modern American experience. Thank you for opening your minds, hearts, and often your homes so that we could explore your remarkable experiences together. I am better for having known you.

I wish to acknowledge the faculty of the Department of Conflict Resolution Studies at Nova Southeastern University. I particularly wish to thank Dr. Jason Campbell, who served as the Committee Chair for this dissertation and who remained a source of support through the entire process. I wish to thank Dr. Robin Cooper and Dr. Dustin Berna, who graciously agreed to serve on the committee for this dissertation. I also wish to thank Dr. Elena Bastidas, whose guidance as my Faculty Advisor during my doctoral studies prepared me not only for this research, but for so many other projects over the years.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, who paved my way, answered my questions, and never lost faith in me. I'm grateful for you all.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Woman Interrogators in Popular Imagination .....	3
Defining Military Interrogation .....	8
Research Goals.....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	17
Feminist Security Studies .....	17
Women as Soldiers, Soldiers as Women .....	27
Women Interrogators in the Literature .....	32
Staff Sergeant Jane Jones.....	35
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	39
Sample.....	45
Instrument .....	49
Data Collection .....	50
Data Analysis .....	53
Reflexivity and Ethics.....	60
Chapter 4: Results .....	66
Superordinate Theme 1: The Integration of Gender with Other Markers of Identity .....	67
Superordinate Theme 2: Recognizing Gender as a Context-Dependent Role.....	71
Superordinate Theme 3: Interrogation as a Complex Interaction.....	86

Superordinate Theme 5: Demonstrating Technical Prowess .....	102
Superordinate Theme 6: Harnessing the System .....	109
Superordinate Theme 7: Reflection and the Development of Self-Awareness .....	115
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	127
Interpretation of Findings .....	128
Gender and Identity Salience .....	128
Negotiating the Emergence of ‘Womanliness’ .....	131
Harnessing Interrogation as a Complex Adaptive System .....	139
The Gentle Interrogator? .....	151
Advancements to the Field of Feminist Security Studies .....	158
Structural Symbolic Interactionism .....	159
‘Regendering’ the Military .....	164
Limitations .....	167
Recommendations for Future Research .....	173
Conclusion .....	175
References .....	176
Appendix A: Interview Questions .....	195



## Abstract

Post-modern feminist security studies explore how our discourse about gender and war affects the construction of security as a concept. Military narratives valorizing the masculine over the feminine have long marginalized women warriors. In recent years, images of the torture and abuse of detainees have appropriated the representation of women interrogators during the Global War on Terrorism in particular. This research applied interpretative phenomenological analysis to the narratives of women interrogators in order to challenge the silence concerning their lived experiences by addressing how women interrogators understand their experiences both as woman and as interrogators, and how they negotiated socially constructed contradictions between these identities. Based on an analysis of semi-structured interviews with eight participants, the findings produced seven, interrelated themes. First, the findings explored the integration of gender with other markers of identity. Next, the findings demonstrated women interrogators recognize gender as a context-dependent role negotiated within the military institution through the development and demonstration of technical prowess. Then, the findings described interrogation as a complex adaptive system in which women interrogators harnessed to achieve their goals. Finally, the findings determined that the intersection of women interrogators' identities and their interactions in the context of interrogation operations generated the perception of women interrogators as non-threatening. Women interrogators learned to exploit the meaning of this emergent phenomenon through introspection and the development of self-awareness.

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The American media became aware of the torture and abuse of detainees at the Abu Ghraib detention facility in 2004. Images of naked or partially naked detainees forced to perform degrading acts while US soldiers gave thumbs up to cameras flooded the news. Pictures of women soldiers, especially of Private First Class Lynndie England, participating in the abuse seemed to evoke a morbid fascination with women committing atrocities in war. The drama of these images was exacerbated by their stark contrast to those of innocent heroism formerly portrayed by the likes of Private First Class Jessica Lynch, whom Special Forces had rescued from being held in an Iraqi hospital in 2003. Within the media's discourse of war, PFC England and PFC Lynch were respectively assigned the roles of 'The Ruined Woman' and 'The Woman in Peril' in a reinforcement of traditional gender norms undermining liberal feminist claims that women were as capable as men of violence as well as bravery (Lobasz, 2008).

Presenting women as legitimate combatants has become in recent years a project of feminist research in the field of security studies in order to address the fact that women soldiers "tend to be overlooked and considered unworthy of researchers' attention because they do not fit accepted standards of femininity" (Wibben, 2011, p. 22). Indeed, women have long played key roles in American military conflicts throughout US history, and increasingly so since September 11, 2001. The number of women service members in the military is now the highest since World War II (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2011). Even before 2001, twenty percent of new recruits were women (Government Accountability Office, 1999), and women now comprise fourteen percent of the active

duty military and eighteen percent of National Guard forces, compared to only two percent in 1950 (Department of Veteran Affairs, 2012). Likewise, women veterans are expected to increase by seventeen percent between 2008 and 2033 (Government Accountability Office, 2009). On January 24, 2013, citing recommendations by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, outgoing U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta signed into effect a policy removing the prohibition against women in military combat duty positions explicitly embodied in the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (Roulo, 2013). This policy change opened up the remaining eight percent of military occupational specialties from which women had been barred (Department of Defense, 2009).

The increasing membership of women in the military over recent years, however, appears not to have eroded the military's identity as one of the most masculine institutions in our society. This failure is exemplified by the media's war coverage, through which war is consistently depicted through the lens of men's experiences while women's experiences are virtually ignored (Harp, Loke, & Bachmann, 2011). The de facto reality 'on the ground' in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated that at least for the last decade many servicewomen routinely participate in combat (Myers, 2009) and key military leadership positions (Broadwell, 2012), calling into question the substance of a debate on whether or not women should be allowed to participate in or oversee combat operations. This debate appears even more anachronistic within military intelligence (MI) career fields. Women soldiers already comprise nineteen percent of US MI officers (CNN, 2013) and in 2014, the senior MI officer of the US Army, Lieutenant General Mary Legere, was a candidate to head the Defense Intelligence Agency, which is the

highest coordinating intelligence agency for the Department of Defense (Harris, 2014).

MI duty positions associated with HUMINT collection, for example, have placed women in close quarters with individuals of whom some – though certainly not all – are violent ‘enemy combatants’.

Simultaneously, however, images of detainee abuse and torture dominate literal and figurative depictions of women service members in positions related to interrogation and detention operations, marginalizing from the collective imagination a fuller picture of the experiences of these women (Titunik, 2009; Harp & Struckman, 2010; Oliver, 2008; Lobasz, 2008). At present, analysis suffers from a dearth of information directly from women interrogators about their challenges faced and their successes earned. Without this analysis one is hard pressed to contest the authority of scandals from detention facilities such as Abu Ghraib, or the dominant discourse of women as the perpetual victims of violent conflict. This discourse contributes to what Jean Elshtain referred to as the ‘beautiful soul/just warrior’ narrative, which constructs women as fragile, domestic angels in need of protection by men constructed as tough, righteous defenders (Elshtain, 1982; Elshtain, 1995; Elshtain, 1998). The ‘beautiful soul/just warrior’ narrative justifies war as a moral imperative and reifies gender stereotypes while belittling polyvalent phenomenological experiences.

### **Woman Interrogators in Popular Imagination**

The Abu Ghraib scandal sparked a national debate about the treatment of detainees and American interrogation practices. As scrutiny increased on the disparities between interrogation practices and espoused American values, more interrogators, some

women, came under investigation. Searching for news articles or research literature on women interrogators almost exclusively leads to discussions of ‘sexual coercion’, ‘rape’, and ‘torture’ – all serious accusations, many of which have been substantiated. These incidents have even led to a one-woman, multimedia stage production based on a satirical work of fiction. In her artistic exploration of this topic, Coco Fusco (2008) discusses the permissiveness on the part of interrogation operations’ leaders for displays of androcentrically defined sexuality by women interrogators that transform women’s sexuality into a form of torture rationalized by feminist themes of personal responsibility and women’s sexual empowerment. “We [feminist women] don’t like to look at ourselves that way. Our popular culture represents female violence as the product of irrationality-the spurned lover, the irate mother, the deranged survivor of abuse. So the picture of what we are becoming in war cannot be clearly drawn” (Fusco, 2008, p. 49). This dilemma particularly troubles Fusco because her understanding of feminine empowerment associates a woman’s willful manipulation of her sexuality with a sense of self-possession.

While overall conclusions indicate that military leadership poorly implemented interrogation doctrine intended to negotiate practices and values, specific conclusions in almost each case directly blame military interrogators as a class for the horrible acts committed by specific perpetrators. In some respects, men interrogators have already mounted a defense of their activities through four published memoirs. In *The Interrogators*, Chris Mackey discusses his experiences as an Army interrogator and interrogation team leader in Afghanistan during the early days of the Global War on

Terrorism (GWOT). In *Fear Up Harsh*, Tony Lagouranis chronicles his struggle as an Army interrogator and Arabic linguist to reconcile official, public policies regarding sanctioned interrogation techniques and his experiences during real world interrogation operations during the early days of the US invasion of Iraq (Lagouranis & Mikaelian, 2007). In *Mission: Black List #1*, Eric Maddox describes his efforts as an Army interrogator and the team he led to capture the deposed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein (Maddox & Seay, 2008). And finally in *How to Break a Terrorist*, Matthew Alexander recounts his experiences as an Air Force Reserve officer deployed as an interrogator and interrogation operations team leader in Iraq in the wake of the Abu Ghraib scandal (Alexander & Bruning, 2008). While these memoirs are clearly intended to represent the personal perspectives of their authors, three out of four include women interrogators in their narratives, which – tragically – provides the richest source material to date on the day to day lives of women interrogators.

Mackey describes two women interrogators who were his subordinates in Afghanistan: “Lynn Pearson” and “Anne-Marie Walker”. Mackey introduces Pearson as a strong Arabic linguist who eventually assumes direction of the team’s document exploitation cell – an administrative position. Walker’s ‘youthful appearance’ frequently takes center stage in what seems to be a pleasure Mackey derives from the apparent contradiction between being an effective interrogator and being a ‘cute girl’. In one situation, Mackey depicts the women as comical caricatures of soldiers: “[I]t was as if the two of them had been primping for some Mad Max prom” (2004, p. 417). When criticizing the status of Pearson’s equipment, however, it dawns on Mackey that he might

be no better suited for the task: “‘Sergeant Pearson! Why isn’t this water bottle full?’ She was too good a soldier to answer the rhetorical question, but I could almost hear her thinking, ‘Because I’ve never been out in combat myself and don’t know how to do a precombat check.’ I thought, ‘Me neither, sister’” (p. 417). This is the only situation in which Mackey expresses even a fleeting solidarity with Pearson and Walker as soldiers.

Lagouranis mostly presents a gender-neutral description of the interrogators with whom he served, and it should be noted that he did not serve in a leadership position during the time covered in his memoir. In most of his narrative, the only indication the reader has that he is talking about a specifically woman interrogator is his use of the feminine personal pronoun because he generally avoids using ‘female’ or ‘woman’ as a modifier. He describes “Lisa” as a relatively withdrawn, less experienced interrogator whose self-consciousness, we are led to believe, causes her to bar her colleagues from observing her interrogations, which Lagouranis cites as being a primary reason for her never secured their confidence in her abilities. The contradiction between her ability to demand from her interrogator colleagues (apparently successfully) that she not be watched and her lack of self-confidence is not explained. “Eliza”, on the other hand, appears as a former military interrogator-turned-civilian contractor. Lagouranis describes Eliza as “a deeply unpleasant person who took every opportunity to advertise the fact that she was proud to be a hard-ass” (2007, p. 41). In her debates with Lagouranis about his sympathies for Iraqi detainees, she reveals that at the core of her own sensitivities lies, at least in part, a fear of being taken advantage of as a woman.

Perhaps because Alexander's book covers the most recent timeframe, women interrogators are the most frequently integrated into descriptions of his team's operations from among the four existing published memoirs by military interrogators. One of the veteran interrogators who inducts Alexander into the 'real world' of interrogations is "Mary", "a short haired Asian-American woman in her late twenties" (Alexander & Bruning, 2008, Location 348) who is also a civilian contractor. Alexander quickly finds Mary to be a staunch adherent to standard approaches with little patience for the 'new methods' relying on the principles of psychology and cultural awareness, which he claims she views with skepticism. Her orientation to interrogation involves seizing the initiative in the communication process, and she prefers to present herself as all-knowing when it comes to the detainee. She has strong clout on the team and with higher leadership, which frustrates Alexander's attempts to influence her preferred interrogation style. "Marcia" is a Hispanic non-commissioned officer with eyes that Alexander tells us "Arabs would call... 'the eyes of Fatima,'" (Alexander & Bruning, 2008, Location 2627) that "radiate compassion" (Location 2659). Marcia's eyes, and indeed her whole approach to interrogation, seems to exercise a calming effect on detainees that foster in them a sense of loyalty and a desire to please her. At no point does Alexander tie this loyalty or this desire to promises of sexual favor, implicitly or otherwise. Still, his description ties her success as an interrogator directly to her physical attributes and how those attributes affected men. "Ann", who graduated with Alexander from his interrogation training course, receives prominent attention, though perhaps as Mary's foil more than for any other reason. In one of the first scenes of the book, Alexander



describes teasing Ann about the presence of camel spiders in the bunkers used as protection during mortar attacks against the compound where they have just arrived. After this, the tone turns almost purely professional in nature, with Ann and Alexander frequently exploring options for using a detainee's sociological qualities (ethnicity, family orientation, etc.) to acquire intelligence information through improved rapport.

These narratives are the only full-length, published, first-person narratives of interrogation operations, and the representation of women interrogators are completely mediated through men's eyes. All of the memoirs seemed imbued with self-consciousness about the personal challenges of conducting interrogation operations in an ethical and legal manner, although all ultimately express the ability to do so with self-awareness and attention to the core values of the HUMINT field. If military interrogators as a community received the blame for torture and abuse, then women interrogators received an especially sinister share, as their position as women soldiers and as interrogators constitutes a double deviance (Titunik, 2009).

### **Defining Military Interrogation**

According to Army Field Manual (FM) 2.22-3, the foundational document for HUMINT operations, planning, and training, "HUMINT interrogation is the systematic process of using approved interrogation approaches to question a captured or detained person to obtain reliable information to satisfy intelligence requirements, consistent with applicable law and policy" (Department of the Army, 2006, p. 89). 'Approaches' are techniques interrogators use to persuade a detainee that provided accurate information in response to the interrogator's inquiries correspond with the detainee's best interests. The

interrogator's goal is to establish rapport with the detainee as quickly and deeply as possible, to identify the detainee's interests, and to attempt to align those interests with the act of providing information to the interrogator. 'Approaches' refer to interpersonal performance techniques intended to manipulate a detainee's psychological disposition in an effort to circumvent the detainee's inhibitions against stating information about threats to American interests, as accurately and completely as the detainee may know them (Department of the Army, 2006). It is with 'approaches' that we find the aspect of interrogation in which most cases of abuse and torture has taken place. Military doctrine has always provided parameters for acceptable approach strategies. Under FM 2.22-3 published in 2006, 'approaches' are thoroughly regulated, but this regulation came about in part as a reaction to loose interpretations some felt were allowed under the prior FM 34-52, published in September 1992. For example, compare the definition of interrogation presented above (from FM 2.22-3) to the definition in its predecessor, FM 34-52: "Interrogation is the process of questioning a source to obtain the maximum amount of usable information" (Department of the Army, 1992, p. 13). The revised FM 2.22-3 clearly attempts to frame interrogation as a practice for which its practitioners are held accountable for how their interpretations translate into action.

Understanding the relationship between HUMINT and how the broader intelligence enterprise supports conflict management in the context of national security requires a basic understanding of how intelligence itself functions. Intelligence is a manufactured product created out of a production cycle not unrecognizable to those familiar with most manufacturing activities. It all begins with a question. At early stages

in national security, that question came from policy makers, but currently the process operates almost entirely autonomously from policy maker inquiries or input. Today, senior intelligence analysts examine the body of knowledge held about a particular issue and query lower-level analysts for responses to gaps in that knowledge. Those analysts then determine which kinds of information will answer the question. The United States intelligence community generally divides intelligence information into five types based upon the technique used to collect them: intelligence information from the interception of broadcast signals (SIGINT), intelligence information from remote sensing of measurements and signature radiations (MASINT), intelligence information from imagery (IMINT), intelligence information from open source information generally available to the public (OSINT), and intelligence information from human sources (HUMINT). Other taxonomies do exist, but these basic divisions constitute the dominant paradigm in the United States intelligence community. Once intelligence analysts examine best fits and resources, the question passes to collectors who manage collection techniques in each type of intelligence information (Clark, 2007). When the question appears answered, a new one is generated, and the cycle continues.

HUMINT collection operations involve a spectrum of intelligence collection activities from a variety of human sources: from interrogation operations addressed here, to source operations such as what people often stereotypically associate with operations involving informants, to debriefing operations conducted, for instance, when interviewing refugees about conditions in the areas from which they have come. When a person is detained by U.S. forces and transferred into the custody of a detention facility, that

facility is legally charged with assuming care of that person, with standard provisions including shelter, food, and medical treatment. The actual process of detention, detainee housing, medical services, guard procedures, and legal processing, though often administered under the purview of interrogation operations, fall under the guise of detention operations and are completely separate from the intelligence information collection process itself (Department of the Army, 2006).

From the beginning of their training, interrogators are instructed and tested in their abilities to understand that they are neither judges nor juries. Contrary to popular belief, interrogators theoretically have no interest in the guilt or innocence of a detainee, no interest in exacting justice upon the detainee, and no interest in extracting a confession from the detainee. The interest of an interrogator is nothing more than acquiring from the detainee as accurate a portrayal of the ‘truth’ as the detainee knows it. For this reason, intelligence information derived from HUMINT operations in general falls under a considerable amount of scrutiny during the analysis process due to the recognition that no one person holds the monopoly on the ‘truth’, as well as the influence of the intelligence collection and reporting process on that ‘truth’. Because HUMINT is only one type of intelligence information, because intelligence information is not fully evaluated intelligence, and because all intelligence reporting processes occur within a bureaucratic system, debates centered on the importance of one piece of information from interrogation – or any other intelligence collection activity, for that matter – is moot. What HUMINT uniquely offers among other intelligence collection methods is the ability to receive indicators of activity requiring additional attention (Clark, 2007). If we use the

terms of the research process, we could say that HUMINT helps to formulate research questions that could not be arrived at through other means. The drawback, of course, is that it requires a great deal of trust in HUMINT collectors, known as HUMINTers, themselves: that they collect from the right people, that their collection occurs using valid collection techniques, and that they are accurately reporting what they have collected.

### **Research Goals**

The regime of torture perpetrated at Abu Ghraib was not an isolated incident, with reports of similar tactics having been used to varying degrees at other interrogation facilities, especially including the one at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Nacos, 2011). What may be understood at the macro-level as permissive policies among senior political and military leadership regarding the abuse of human beings ostensibly held in the care of military detention officials (McCoy, 2006), may appear quite different from the micro-level perspective of the individual HUMINTer in his or her role as interrogator. At the macro-level, however, incidents in which the interrogator was identified as a woman, the gender of the interrogator was represented as a contributing, if not the essential, factor in causing psychological discomfort, cultural offense, and physical pain. This correspondence constructs a paradigm that interrogators are ‘women’ only when their gender plays a role in abuse and torture. Research on women interrogators has thus far focused on what the torture scandals of the GWOT means for the role of women as the perpetrators of sexual violence against men. Women interrogators are lumped together with the likes of Lynndie England, while the day-to-day lives of women interrogators have been ignored almost completely. Representations of women interrogators not

involved in international scandals only rarely been the subject of focused research. With one exception (Godfrey, 2012), research has yet to place women interrogators at the center of descriptive, interpretative, or analytic strategies, despite the unique and culturally salient perspectives they promise to provide.

This research has three primary goals. The first goal is to increase our knowledge of the experiences of women interrogators beyond the descriptions currently available. This research includes narratives of the lived experiences of women interrogators as well as their interpretations of those experiences, in particular as they concern identification as a woman and an interrogator. Expanding the research repertoire on this topic disrupts the gendering of the military as a masculine institution – disturbing the beautiful soul/just warrior theory used to justify war – and challenges the correlation between women interrogators and sexualized interrogation practices. The second goal of this research is to make sense of those experiences using gender as what Jeanne Boydston called a “question of analysis” (2008). This research seeks to interpret the experiences of women interrogators through an understanding of narrative as a constituting force of the meaning-making project. The dichotomy of male versus female, men versus women, and masculine versus feminine is understood as a product of that meaning making project as much as a tool of it. The findings intend to demonstrate how military interrogators negotiate the performance of their gender to increase an overall understanding of how gender performance occurs in within a war-fighting context. Furthermore, it seeks to conduct that interpretation while respecting the participants as rational agents. Such an approach provides women with a new forum to express their agency in a patriarchally

dominated discourse that overwhelmingly dilutes and discourages women's agency and the validity of their experiences as armed combatants. Finally, this research intends to shed light on the mechanisms that at least one group of women interrogators used to negotiate their identities as women and their identities as interrogators. The participants of this research are part of a society that genders its members, and debates both the social roles of women in combat and the methods U.S. military forces use to combat terrorism. Women interrogators are not ignorant of popular biases (and sadistic fascinations) about who they are as people and what they have done in service to their country. They may have even brought these biases to their roles as soldiers. As they participated in the field of interrogation as women soldiers, they faced contradictions between the myth and reality first hand. Understanding the processes for how they managed these challenges has the potential to influence the training that the next generation of women interrogators may receive.

Revealing these hidden stories has the potential to re-write our scripts for women interrogators and affect how they are accepted into society. Viewing women as legitimate warriors, however, is a controversial undertaking. Approaching the field of feminist security studies from the direction of war studies as opposed to peace studies acknowledges, "war as an inclusive transhistorical and transcultural institution that shapes and is shaped by gendered subjects and discourses" (Sylvester, 2010, p. 609). Feminism in general, however, has long preferred to align feminist consciousness with nonviolence and the study of peace. Women who take up arms are described as subject to a false consciousness leading them to participate in the valorization of men (and their

institutions) over women (Enloe, 2000). Women interrogators are the subjects of a particular fascination. Despite the presence of published memoirs by men military interrogators suggesting women interrogators have developed a wide repertoire of unique approaches to their jobs, an overwhelming silence meets the investigator looking for the meaning of those experiences as women interrogators engage in interpersonal relationships with detainees. As soldiers, they are engaged in perpetrating violence within the military's rules of engagement even though society has traditionally assigned them roles that would exclude them from this activity. The routine performance of their duties within legal parameters, however, has been ignored in favor of the proscribed violence of torture committed at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). It is a radical act to treat women interrogators' understandings of their experiences as a legitimate part of the cannon of women's lives. This research assumes the position that the experiences of women interrogators can inform the construction of gender identity in the military, contest muted representations of their lives, and form part of a larger literature of invisible histories during circumstances of armed conflict.

The voices of soldiers who identify as women contribute to our understanding of the achievements of military interrogators during war. They disrupt binary oppositions assigning men to the realm of soldiery and women outside of it. As interrogators in general have experiences not traditionally part of the canon of social experiences, relaying their stories through the lens of gender has the potential to shed new light on innovative approaches to gender performance as it is manipulated to achieve specific results to manage conflict. They may also assist in normalizing our national and social



paradigms about the range of gender performance military service members integrate into the performance of their duties. This paradigm shift not only reflects on how we approach the contradictions between our espoused ideals and our values-in-use in terms of national security, but also influences which lessons from our recent history of interrogation operations the military should incorporate into future plans and training.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research takes place within the framework of feminist security studies and its approach to a specific context during conflict. The literature reviewed for this study begins broadly with the emergence of feminist security studies from the field of international security studies – itself a sub-discipline of international relations. Given that framework, it then turns to research on women soldiers, specifically a growing body of literature examining women as combatants in armed conflict as opposed to antiwar themes common in traditional feminist security studies. Then, it explores the representation of women interrogators as a specific group of combatants, to demonstrate how predominant antimilitarist themes in the literature have not been adequately challenged.

### **Feminist Security Studies**

Feminist security studies developed from the question of whether traditional security studies had adequately addressed the meaning of “security”, which, up until the 1980s, had remained exclusively state-centric. “Security” was understood as a condition that states achieve through state mechanisms of coercion and persuasion. The focus of security studies, therefore, was on the solvency of state political systems. In the 1980s, researchers examining the effects of armed conflict on civilian populations suggested that the term “security” may hold meanings that transcend state-centric models. These critical scholars set out to explore the relationship between security and human well-being, economic activity, the environment, ethnic and nationalist identity, and a host of other subjects that had heretofore been treated outside the traditional security discourse

(Blanchard, 2003; Sjoberg & Martin, 2007). Feminist researchers took the question of “Security for whom?” and used it to cast light on circumstances where women in particular suffered rather than benefited from state-sponsored military engagements (Buzan & Hanzen, 2009). Through these efforts, feminists linked both structural and direct violence against women to the militarization of societies, spawning a body of literature that formed the foundation of feminist security studies.

Feminist security studies established a dichotomy whereby security through exclusion (state-centric models) and state security institutions (such as the military) became associated with masculinity, while security through interdependence (human-centric models) and institutions of social security (such as the family) became associated with femininity (Sjoberg & Martin, 2007). Feminist security researchers initiated a project for re-writing the vision of what security means and how to achieve it by revealing how the structure of international security marginalized women. These structuralists claimed that the concept of “security” does not reflect universal, *a priori* meanings, but is constructed within a social system privileging men over women (Tickner & Sjoberg, 2011; Sjoberg, 2010a, Sylvester, 2010). The deconstruction of security, therefore, can provide insights into gender privilege, and vice versa. By extension, this approach raises interesting questions about how women’s participation in armed conflict might be understood within a broader context of military force as a conflict management tool.

Goldstein (2001) divides structuralist feminist security studies regarding women’s participation in armed conflict into liberal feminist and difference feminist approaches.

The liberal feminist approach states that women are no more or less suited to be soldiers than men, either physically or psychologically. Liberal feminists point to a variety of circumstances where women have served as warriors, a collection of historical figures Elshtain (1995) calls the “Ferocious Few” who have been displaced in military narratives in order to reify men’s power and patriarchy. For example, one argument against women in the military has been that men (by which is meant biological males) are physically stronger and more aggressive than women (as biological females). Men, therefore, are more naturally suited for the tasks upon which success in war depends. Liberal feminists have responded that while *on the aggregate* males exhibit profiles different from females, the bell curve of those profiles overlap far more than could be used to justify the historical absence of women warriors (Freedman, 2003). Denying women positions as legitimate warriors merely because females’ aggregate sex characteristics correspond to less physical strength or aggression denies the existence of individual females who are suited for supposed warring activities, even in the most traditional sense.

Even if this was not the case, however, what constitutes the activities of war is not ahistorical. Modern warfare “seems to require, as much as physical aggression, a tolerance of boredom or the ability to operate a computer under stress, characteristics that are neither distinctly ‘masculine’ nor heroic” (Ruddick, 1989, pp. 151-2). In this sense, liberal feminism states that women’s participation in armed conflict is marginalized in order to deny women access to the social benefits reserved for those who provide for the defense of their communities. Liberal feminism often praises women’s penetration of the military as a necessary step toward equalizing access to American institutions for both

men and women. Women veterans, liberal feminists would point out for instance, are more likely than women non-veterans to assume professional management positions and have higher median income according to analysis of American Community Survey data (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015).

Liberal feminists see the military as an important social institution that often provides a fast track to job training, political authority, and social prestige from which women are excluded as a function of sexist discrimination. They seek to use their research to generate pathways for overturning this discrimination. For example, Fairfield-Artman (2010) examined women university students enrolled in the US Army's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) to identify themes in how the women understood their roles as military cadets. Fairfield-Artman developed four metaphors to describe the stories in her research: Minimalists strongly identify with military culture and do so without much reflection on their experiences. Traditionalists adopt non-gender traditional military values, norms, and behaviors only as much as they feel is necessary, but actively promote more traditional gender identities. Enthusiasts fully embrace the military lifestyle and maintain a present-tense orientation on the excitement and sense of adventure military service provides. Finally, meditators adopt military standards but hold firmly to a sense of critical thinking about the relationship between their gendered self-identities and warrior stereotypes. Fairfield-Artman uses her findings to prescribe methods for the military to address these orientations by actively promoting diverse representations of women in the military to encourage a broader construction of possible identities, connecting military training to community service to foster reflection on the

performance of military duties and the reception of women soldiers by the outside world, training through small group instruction emphasizing student-led reflective learning to more directly assist women in coordinating their identities as women soldiers.

From a quantitative perspective, Ryan (2008) used multivariate regression analysis on a survey administered to women and men soldiers evaluating their attitudes toward women, modern sexism, and social dominance orientation. Ryan found that women were more open to flexible manifestations of gender and gender role conformance, neither age nor civilian education level significantly accounted for attitudes toward women, and reservist soldiers (men and women) were marginally more positive toward women than active duty soldiers. She also found that women and ethnic minorities had a more positive attitude toward egalitarianism, neither age nor civilian education level significantly accounted for orientation toward social dominance, and reservist soldiers were marginally more socially egalitarian than active duty soldiers. Finally, Ryan found a strong positive correlation between being disposed to social egalitarianism and looking favorably upon women in military service. Ryan concluded that a more comprehensive approach to social equality within the armed forces could lead to more favorable attitudes toward women specifically and may serve to augment the effects of training dedicated to improving the attitude of soldiers toward women in the service. Liberal feminist researchers, then, use their work on the experiences of women service members to deconstruct the mechanisms barring women from military service and to monitor progress toward full equality (Rzechowka, 2010; Sasson-Levy, Levy, & Lomsky-Feder, 2011).

Difference feminism, on the other hand, represents the military as a masculine institution whose very *raison d'être* consists of enforcing patriarchy and domination. These values are intrinsically and irreconcilably in direct opposition to feminine values of peace and nonviolence. What is seen as women's biological nature predisposes them to be life givers and nurturers, and this predisposition conflicts with the demands of militarized institutions. Meanwhile, the equation of security and autonomy within the international political system contradicts women's socially learned understanding of security through interdependence (Goldstein, 2001). In contrast to the liberal feminist position advocating for the inclusion of women in the military, difference feminism views women's attempts to penetrate the military as failed and failing concepts. Women who appear to have done so successfully constitute such vast exceptions that they serve more to bolster patriarchal narratives of control and violence than to reform society toward the goals of social justice and inclusion (Goldstein, 2001). From the perspective of difference feminism, the relegation of women to non-combat assignments serves to reinforce traditional gender roles. Men are allowed, if not funneled, into positions as armed combatants, while women are kept in combat support positions through a selection process that devalues women's labor (Enloe, 2004), preserves the 'male bonding experience' military leaders (all inevitably men) have traditionally associated with unit cohesion (Kremmer, 2009; Rzechowka, 2010), and perpetuate internalized feelings of inferiority among women service members (Crowley, 2010; Taber, 2011). Women who join the military are understood by difference feminists as participants in their own subjugation, exacerbated by how women soldiers are forced to reject their femininity for

masculinity without ever fully achieving a status permitting self-actualization as both fully soldier and fully woman.

For difference feminist researchers, then, work on the experiences of women service members serve to reveal, “patriarchy’s adaptive qualities and its limits” (Enloe, 2007) in order to undermine the prestige of military institutions as institutions of patriarchal domination. At times, though, it seems the difference feminist research agenda rests so strongly on a feminist Marxist theory of alienation, that research findings too readily dismiss research participants’ own interpretations of their experiences. For example, Silva (2008) finds in her research with women and men university students in the ROTC that while gender forms a significant aspect of soldiers’ identities, many of the women candidates feel ROTC is a gender-blind institution that offers them a chance to escape unrealistic expectations about femininity and feminine performance in the university culture as a whole. At the same time, both men and women prescribed gendered role expectations to ROTC members. Women report feeling they are often subject to additional scrutiny, while men report their perceptions that for a woman ROTC member to be successful, she must meet both the standards of military service as well as those of her gender. The women appear in Silva’s research to actively address this contradiction by defining combat situations as gender neutral contexts and garrison environments as gender-permissive contexts. Assuming a staunchly difference feminist position, however, Silva concludes that despite the liberal feminist position that more women in the military will inevitably result in more equality for women, women are still caught in cycles of gender performance reinforced by internalized belief systems that



view the gender roles of our culture as natural and undermine women's ability to achieve self-realization in any military context.

Both liberal and difference feminists rely on fundamental concepts that post-modernists find problematic. Post-modern feminist researchers questioned the construction of gender itself, particularly as it concerns the binary oppositions of male/female, men/women, and masculine/feminine (Buzan & Hazen, 2009). For poststructuralist feminists, gender is recognized as a socially constructed concept brought into being through the use of discourse. Likewise, biological sex has no natural social meaning independent of that discourse – a discourse that includes the gendering of institutions as much as people (Bem, 1993). Post-modern feminists see that equating the feminine with the nonviolent and women with the victims of militarization forces women into social roles that preclude full participation in key decision-making institutions. Women's experiences of successfully negotiating leadership, violence, and armed combat are marginalized from the dominant discourse of war and conflict resolution (Haeri & Puechguirbal, 2010).

In this analysis of interviews with women service personnel about their experiences negotiating gender expectations as military members Hicks (2011), assumes a social constructionist position contending that as individuals and groups we actively participate in the creation of reality through our contexts and social institutions, respectively. One perspective argues that as a minority group, women offer a better understanding of how military membership is conferred than men. This understanding comes from the representation of women as 'natural outsiders' to the military system,

which Anzaldúa explains as “a kind of survival tactic that people, caught between the worlds, unknowingly cultivate” (1999, p. 61). The system itself is constructed to facilitate success within a masculinized context where men – ostensibly gendered throughout their lives toward the masculine, and for whom being masculine is treated as corresponding to men’s intrinsic nature – receive the benefit of the doubt. Women therefore develop a more conscious awareness of how the system works in order to achieve success with in it. Hicks theorized that the process of managing membership in military service involves enlisting, enculturating, advancing, sustaining, and concluding military service. His research furthers explanations for how gendered patterns of making life choices, managing perceptions of ability, and exercising agency over sexual activities shapes how the process of membership manifested itself within the individual lives of its women members.

Post-modernist approaches also reveal how focusing on the patriarchal identity of one institution clouds the pervasiveness of gender discourse. For example, Levin (2011) describes how young women serving in combat positions within the Israeli military negotiate their gender and sexuality based on a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. Israeli gender differentiation occurs early in childhood with military training being a normal part of boys’ upbringing. While military service is now considered common for women, service in combat positions is still a relatively new phenomenon. Women have now been allowed into combat positions long enough, however, that Levin suspects they have begun adapting for the military context gendered negotiation strategies from their civilian lives. Levin’s interest, then, is to represent a snapshot of

how that process is evolving. Levin found women soldiers had forged strategies to deal with three experiential aspects: First, women are caught between the choice of exaggerating their gender performances or downplaying them. The former facilitates their taking advantage of being sexually attractive to their men counterparts to receive favors, reduce workloads, and avoid undesirable tasks. This approach, however, undermines their ability to be taken seriously as soldiers. The latter approach facilitates their being taken more seriously in their duties, but at the risk of being thought of as ‘dykish,’ which makes it difficult for them to engage in heteronormative romantic relationships. Second, most women in the study – and all the women who chose to exaggerate their femininity – occasionally experienced their heterosexual men counterparts viewing the women as sexual objects. In many cases this objectification appeared to be correlated with incidents of sexual harassment. The women felt they had few options to address incidents of sexual harassment within the military context, and many carried this trauma with them back into their civilian lives. Third, the status of women soldiers was often directly linked to the status of the men they dated. Therefore, women increased their social standing above their own ranks by forming romantic partnerships with men of higher ranks or in units of higher prestige, which the women often hoped would translate into a marital relationship in the civilian world. In summary, Levin’s findings demonstrated that very similar dynamics in society as a whole (gender discrimination in professional settings, sexual harassment, and social advancement through marriage) were being exercised in Israeli combat units. While the Israeli Army is often examined as an example of the successful integration of women into a combat force, Levin shows that the discourse of patriarchy

and heteronormative gender relations is as much as question of society in general rather than of a single institution.

Liberal, difference, and post-modern approaches to feminist security studies reflect the three dominant positions regarding the women's inherent approaches to conflict and whether gender stereotypes should be co-opted to achieve equality, subverted to achieve feminist purposes, or rejected to clear a path for new constructions (Burguières, 1990). In many ways one should expect to find this diversity within feminist scholarship, as it explicitly advocates for expanding the standpoints from which topics are examined, decrying monolithic approaches as inherently exclusionary. Revealing and exploring women as warriors have the potential to undermine the masculine characterization of the military as an institution (DeCew, 1995; Kronsell, 2006) as well as the 'beautiful soul' narrative regarding women as a precious object whose protection justifies the enterprise of war (Sjoberg, 2010b; Elshtain, 1995). Women have succeeded as warriors in a variety of historical contexts, and their experiences constitute a body of "invisible histories" worthy of the feminist security studies project.

### **Women as Soldiers, Soldiers as Women**

In her work on the archetypes of the 'beautiful soul' and the 'just warrior', Jean Elshtain deconstructs how discourse on war contributes to the gendering of social roles and establishes the basis for just war doctrine in armed conflict. Western culture is imbued with just warrior/beautiful soul representations that script the narrative of what it means to be men and women, excluding room for middle ground: Madonna weeps at the foot of Jesus now dead on the cross. The demure princess lets slip a handkerchief to the

foot of a knight as a token for his joust. The (woman) factory worker operates a machine pressing metal into bomb casings for the (man) pilot to drop on the ‘enemy threat’. On the one hand, we find the image of the “Just Warrior”: strong, aggressive, violent, and inevitably a man. Men stand vigilant against threats and penetrate the external world in defense of the homeland. On the other hand, we find the image of the “Beautiful Soul”: weak, passive (or pacifistic), nonviolent, and inevitably a woman. Women nurture the home and represent the internal world that deserves protection. Just warriors return at the end of their tragic adventures as honored members of society, citizens in full rights, deserving deference for their courage. They return to the comforting arms of the beautiful souls whose innocent fragility demands the sacrifices of war, however regrettable. Women gain their civic worth birthing the soldiers of tomorrow and through committing themselves to the service of their protectors. They cheer on the fighters and mourn the fallen (Elshtain, 1982; Elshtain, 1995; Elshtain, 1998). Elshtain’s theory in part explains how the idea of women combatants is so readily denied from the popular narrative of military service.

Gender identities remain important in the military – as they do in society as a whole – and the research literature is clear regarding the capacity for military service members to adapt their gender performances to the contingencies of specific contexts. Women continue to enlist even as the hardships they often face seems to dominate how women’s military experiences have been characterized in the media and research. At the same time, women in military service employ a variety of strategies to negotiate tensions between the expectations of their gender and their military contexts. Regardless of what

might be termed the “success rates” of these or any other strategy, women soldiers demonstrate an awareness of the challenges coordinating their identities as women and soldiers. Furthermore, they exercise their agency through a variety of methods to address these challenges, rather than being passive victims of their circumstances. Women interrogators break traditional gender roles merely by virtue of their presence in the battlespace. As Butler demonstrated, gender is performed rather than unveiled (1988; 1997; 2004), and as the post-modern feminists have pointed out, gender is a lens of analysis that brings with it limitations we rarely acknowledge (Bem, 1993; see also Gould, 1999). Gender roles in our society are imbued with stereotypes that claim a monopoly on what is desirable, if not natural. But that those roles do not point to ahistorical, pre-existent concepts immune to the meaning making projects of human interaction does not mean they are not real to the lives of people who identify, through whatever combination of nature or nurture, as women, soldiers, and, as the case may be, interrogators.

In a meta-analysis, Furia (2009) reviews her own body of research and explores the methods women have used to deal with the military’s contradictory recognition of the necessity of women soldiers to its success while ignoring the need to develop the hospitality of military institutions toward women. Furia feels women resist being denied access to military institutions through three ways. First, they exaggerate their femininity up to and sometimes over the line military regulations permit. This exaggeration provides them with the chance to perform according to the gender stereotypes in which they were socialized while defiantly highlighting the presence of the feminine in military circles.

Second, women actively combat stereotypes about women and their roles within the military by working especially hard to secure more achievements than their men colleagues and by exuding a hypermasculinity. Third, women attempted to remain out of sight and below the threshold of detection by doing the absolute minimum and avoiding positions that garnered them attention. Furia acknowledges that women do not assume these postures uniformly, and that individual women do not follow one approach consistently. Rather, women soldiers adopt whichever tactic they feel will best meet their needs according to the contingencies of the situation.

Crowley (2010) attempts to describe the experiences of women soldiers in the Army to inform our understanding of the role of gender norms and military social contexts in women's experiences in military service. She interviews women Army veterans who had received the Combat Action Badge – a military badge awarded to Army service members for satisfactory performance in direct exchanges of fire with an enemy – for service in a combat environment in Iraq, and analyzed the interviews using thematic analysis through in vivo coding. Many of the women soldiers self-identified as 'tomboys' comfortable working with (and competing against) men prior to their military enlistments. Regardless of how well the women performed out of stereotypically feminine roles, they felt assigned an inferior status among their men colleagues. The women seemed to feel that different standards (in terms of physical fitness, hygiene, etc.) for women during daily military life equated to different values for their service, with many of the women wishing standards had been established by job rather than by gender. When working mostly with men, the women experienced feeling like the 'token female'

and felt pressured to perform to a higher standard to fulfill that role than befitted their duties. All of the participants experienced or witnessed sexual harassment during their time of service. Some women reported purposefully taking steps to appear more masculine, such as hiding their breasts, to show they were soldiers first. In an apparent reaction to subduing their femininity when in the company of the men colleagues, the women then engaged in particularly stereotypical feminine activities (painting toenails albeit in flesh colors, etc.) to maintain a connection to their feminine identities.

Taber (2011) attempts to describe how women learn to coordinate their lives as mothers and their careers as soldiers. She suspects that androcentrism connects to the defensive prerogatives of patriarchy to redefine the norms of masculinity when women successfully penetrate previously restricted social positions, such as the military. Women, on the other hand, seem to negotiate expressing their ‘femininity’ within a military context in ways that are less clear-cut than merely attempting to mimic stereotypically masculine behaviors at the expense of their identities as women. Taber finds four primary themes: 1) men and their preoccupations are taken more seriously than women and theirs; 2) women must either chose to perform traditional roles or work much harder than men to break out of that mold, but they can do it; 3) for women unlike for men, families and careers are often a zero-sum game; 4) the military often represents itself as a family unit whose needs must take priority over those of the service member’s ‘real’ family. The influence of the system on these women is not especially surprising because if it was not this powerful then it would not garner as much interest or concern. Taber concludes that “women therefore do not have a clear trajectory into full participation” (p. 344) – a point



emphasizing how women must actively construct strategies rather than relying on ready-made paths to success.

Research within the framework of feminist security studies has demonstrated the prescience of gender identity in questions about security. At the individual level, women have recognized at various levels of consciousness that they are subjected to complex and sometimes contradictory social pressures to conform to gender expectations. In many cases of women soldiers, those social pressures do not appear to have the final word in the women's decision-making process. Some do not interpret their identities as soldiers as conflicting with their identities as women, and others only do so with a sense that they are victims of injustice. The literature reveals women soldiers to be active agents in perceiving their identities as much as in the management of others' impressions. One would expect to see this quality demonstrated in interesting and unique ways by women interrogators whose regular duties in combat zones requires them to negotiate relationships with detained individuals deemed 'the enemy', as well as with their professional cohorts.

### **Women Interrogators in the Literature**

As already demonstrated, women interrogators especially have had their representation usurped by scandals at American military detention facilities. The active involvement of some women soldiers in the abuse and torture of detainees played on the public imagination and anti-feminists put it to the service of advancing opposition to women soldiers (Titunik, 2009). As revelations of abuse and torture being carried out at U.S. detention facilities surfaced, the word 'interrogator' became inextricably linked with

the word ‘torture’, and no more shockingly so than with regard to the role of women interrogators. The representation of women interrogators came to be defined by the most explicit forms of erotic deviance that captures the voyeuristic attention of the public, banishing alternative representations (Harp & Struckman, 2010; Lobasz, 2008). The media drew particular inspiration from the image of Lynndie England (Harp & Struckman, 2010), forcing liberal feminists to remind us that recognizing full equality for women might also mean recognizing the equal capacity of women to commit evil (Fusco, 2008; Gaboury, 2009; Oliver, 2007; Oliver 2008). For all their due merit, feminist critiques of America’s involvement in torture and abusive interrogation techniques appear to have latched onto a small minority of cases among a substantially larger population of women interrogators not involved in sexual abuse scandals. The minority status of these cases does not reduce their severity or the concerns they raise. It does, however, evoke the question of just representation and the marginalization of the voices of women’s alternative experiences.

Feminist researchers contributed to the discourse equating women interrogators with sexual violence. In “Sexual Rights as Human Rights”, for example, Gaboury (2009) attempts to reconstruct feminist understandings of violence during war in light of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. She argues, along with Barbara Ehrenreich (2004), that the appearance of women inflicting sexual violence upon men uproots trends of thinking about sexual violence as the purview of male perpetrators against (primarily, though not exclusively) female victims. Her analysis rests upon two possible positions for women in the military: either that of the victim of sexual violence, presented as the most common,

or that of the perpetrator, presented as the most counter-intuitive. Women interrogators serve to illustrate and inform her approach only by virtue of the contradiction between behaviors expected from those of their gender and supposedly entrenched stereotypes about sexual violence. Also, Gaboury (2009) makes hardly any distinction between interrogators and non-interrogators, classing women as a category whose influence supersedes other factors of their personal and professional identities.

The primacy of gender over duty position appears more pronounced in Rumann's feminist legal analysis of investigations of abuse and torture undertaken by U.S. government officials (2010). Rumann suggests, perhaps rightly, that the occurrence of sexual violence against detainees may be even more prevalent than has been heretofore acknowledged, and may open the door to future legal actions based on less restrictive applications of legal standards than has been applied thus far. Beginning with the title "Use of Female Interrogators", the discourse of her article presents and reinforces sweeping generalizations that seem to equate the very womanhood of an interrogator with the sexualized nature of an interrogation. One frequently finds the phrase "use of gender and sexualized interrogation" as if they came as an inseparable package. In listing "sexually explicit interrogation techniques", she begins with "the seemingly innocuous 'use of female interrogator'" (p. 278). At one point, she quotes a lawyer outlining the abuses allegedly suffered by her client as describing, "in detail the actions of the women interrogators of Guantanamo" (p. 283). She concludes by saying, "The intent behind the use of female interrogators could only have been the intent to use female sexuality as a coercive force" (p. 300). Even a less than generous assessment would be hard pressed to

deny completely the existence of women interrogators who have been able to reconcile their gender or sexuality without it becoming a source of exploitation or sexual violence.

While these critiques certainly present analysis key to modern feminist understandings of the influence of women in positions as interrogators during the GWOT, they represent an analytical block that tacitly, when not explicitly, delegitimizes the presence of women as interrogators. At the heart of feminist critiques it often appears that the discourse regarding women interrogators undergirds an androcentric approach toward the experience of being an interrogator in which the womanhood of an interrogator is essentially linked to a particular, sexually sinister deviation from the non-feminine norm.

### **Staff Sergeant Jane Jones**

The feminist security studies literature appears to contain only one example of research directly addressing the influence of a woman interrogator's professional occupation on her gender identity in which the research subject's perspectives receive primacy of place in the analysis. Over the course of three years, Godfrey (2012) analyzed a series of semi-structured interviews with "Staff Sergeant Jane Jones" totaling more than twenty hours collected over a two-year period. Jones identifies as a woman who served as a US Army interrogator in Baghdad, Iraq. Godfrey conducted the research because, taking a cue from Enloe, "studying women in the military sheds light on the 'adaptive qualities' of gender in the military context" (p. 156), a quality Godfrey argues must be better understood specifically within the context of war. Looking first from a sociological perspective, Godfrey explores Jones' military enlistment, training to become an

interrogator, and experience serving as an interrogator in Iraq. She then applies a psychological lens to explore how being an interrogator changed Jones' perceptions of self and of her gender.

Jones hoped that by joining the military she would become more self-confident and emotionally disciplined. Common to preconceptions about interrogation operations, her first reaction upon being assigned as an interrogator was that her small physical size did not afford the physical presence to intimidate others, which she thought was necessary to succeed in the job. During training, trainees were told that they should use whatever personal characteristics they possessed in order to fulfill their duties. That guidance translated for women trainees into a blanket encouragement to use their 'feminine charms' as a tool for interrogation – something that men trainees were not encouraged to do. Even though Godfrey breaks the narrative of her analysis to explain how likely it is gender coercion plays a key role in women interrogators' activities, Jones clearly states she found no merit in the idea for her own practice and never heard of other women interrogators using it. Instead, she found that her mere presence as a woman disoriented detainees enough that she was able to take advantage of the detainees' cognitive dissonance to acquire intelligence information. In fact, she specifically attempted to exacerbate that dissonance through her performance as a women interrogator. She achieved by exaggerating stereotypically masculine patterns of communication and encouraging detainees to believe she supervised men soldiers, which she believes heightened the disparity between detainees' expected gender roles and their observations of her.

In retrospect, Jones feels remorseful about the role the US military played in the invasion of Iraq and how she personally embodied an ethos of superiority over the Iraqis with whom she interacted. Despite this, Jones discusses her military service as a period of personal autonomy and economic independence she feels she lost returning to civilian life. As an interrogator and soldier she grew accustomed to low context, direct styles of communication. She later found this style served her poorly when trying to build relationships as a civilian. This challenge was due in part to expectations civilian society places on women to communicate indirectly, emphasizing meek inquiry over blatant directives – oddly enough the same dynamic she exploited as an interrogator. Godfrey concludes that Jones struggled to find a balance between her agency and responsibility as an interrogator, a struggle that appears to cross gender boundaries among veterans. In Jones' case as a woman, the struggle extended to coordinating her sense of agency and responsibility internalized through her occupation as a soldier with those defined by societal expectations of her gender.

Godfrey's work affirms the value of exploring the evolution of gender identity through the lens of a military profession as reliant on interpersonal performance as interrogation. Godfrey approaches her analysis using an instrumental case study methodology, appropriate for when we "have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case" (Stake, 1995, p. 3). While providing an in-depth description of Jones, Godfrey's work is not intended to understand the essence of negotiating gender identity in the occupational context of military interrogation. Furthermore, her work triangulates

Jones' narrative with Godfrey's interpretation of outside literature, but Jones herself has no opportunity to mediate Godfrey's analysis as a co-producer of the research.

With the exception of Godfrey, research to date has not attempted to describe how a women interrogator understands the meaning of her experiences. And no research at all has attempted to analyze a collection of those interpretations to determine the salient features of that phenomenology. The research here intends to address a gap in the literature by attempting to make sense of the experience of women interrogators as they interpret their struggles to reconcile their identities as women with their identities as interrogators. The literature overall confirms that gender identity serves as a viable framework of analysis. Acknowledging its use as a lens of meaning making reveals one gap in our record of the experiences of military interrogators. Therefore, while this research assumes the post-modern position that the polarization of gender is constructed, contested, and worthy of critical analysis, it explicitly seeks to facilitate access to the voices of soldiers who self-identify as women. Also, unlike in liberal and difference feminist positions, this research accepts Butler's position that all gender is performance (2004). Acknowledging the performance aspects of the interrogator-detainee relationship (Department of the Army, 2006) provides an opportunity to explore the essential characteristics of how women interrogators have adapted their interpersonal performances in the context of military conflict.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The results of this research are intended to provide insight into the experiences of women interrogators that has not yet been represented in the literature. In keeping with reflexive patterns of feminist research, the primary audience this research seeks to serve is women interrogators themselves. Even though the post-modern tradition interrogates the construction of gender dichotomies, the literature examined in this proposal indicates that a debate as to whether or not those dichotomies are constructed at all appears to be of little relevance. The participants of this research all identify as women, and as such they deserve to see at least something of their identities and experiences reflected in the literature of security, conflict, and war.

Secondly, this research intends to make sense of the experiences of women interrogators beyond the level of mere narrative, and to increase understanding of alternative roles for gender in how the tools and labor engaged in armed conflict are perceived. All of the memoirs published by American military interrogators describe how deliberately interrogators pull from their backgrounds and experiences in search of some point of common reference allowing them to mold interpersonal relationships with detainees through the management of rapport and the application of interrogation approach strategies (Mackey & Miller, 2004; Lagouranis & Mikealian, 2007; Maddox & Seay, 2008; Alexander & Bruning, 2008). Based on interrogators who have already contributed interpretations of their experiences to the understanding of the field of human intelligence (HUMINT) collection, it is clear that interrogation also includes a significant element of performance as well as wit. If both gender and interrogation are viewed as



acts of performance, then it makes sense to ask how the two acts of performance intersect. The descriptive and interpretive aspects of this research respond to this question.

Thirdly, the findings of this research are explored for their implications on how women interrogators are trained and how their contributions to national security might be appreciated in context. Training programs for interrogators appear to have emerged from an analysis of interrogation operations that overwhelmingly represents the experiences of men interrogators. The most recent doctrine on American military interrogation contains a standard administrative prologue stating, “Use of the terms ‘he’ and ‘him’ in this manual should be read as referring to both males and females unless otherwise expressly noted” (Department of the Army, 2006, p. viii). In a world of hegemonic masculinity, however, claiming gender neutrality is a key component of dismissing the presence of women (Kronsell, 2006). This research hopes to formalize women’s experiences for developing innovative approaches that account for gender identities and how they may be perceived in the context of interrogation operations.

In order to achieve these goals, two research questions drive this study:

RQ1. How do women interrogators understand their experiences as both women and interrogators?

RQ2. How do women interrogators negotiate the socially constructed contradictions between their simultaneous identities as women and interrogators?

Because this research seeks to provide interpretive meanings of a lived phenomenon, it relies upon qualitative research methods in the tradition of hermeneutical phenomenology (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Certain positions regarding the experiences of women interrogators require the use of a qualitative methodology. Ontologically, this research acknowledges the validity of multiple perspectives and the construction of reality through interaction and subjective experience. This research values how its participants understand their experiences and negotiate their identities without attempting to compare them to an external, authoritative standard. Epistemologically, knowledge is recognized as collaboration between the researcher and the researched. Knowledge is jointly produced through the research process rather than a pre-existent ideal discovered through the process of stripping away distractions from underlying structures. Axiologically, research findings are not viewed as value neutral, and the researchers seeks to make his values clear to the reader. Rhetorically, the researcher may resort to writing in the first person when appropriate because he does not intend to mask his presence in the text. Additionally, first person narratives will be necessary to bracket the researcher's own experiences (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994), as well as to relate certain direct interactions between the researcher and the research participants. Methodologically, this approach to research involves inductive reasoning whereby it hopes to tease themes emerging from a body of text representative of a selection of individual cases. Each of these positions places this research squarely within the purview of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007).

Phenomenological research methods stitch together diverse perspectives on a single phenomenon to transfer the meaning of an experience to others (Moustakas, 1994). This research examines how various participants have experienced and interpreted their identities as women and their identities as interrogators. This information comes as a result of each participant having lived as a woman interrogator, while none hold the monopoly on the essence of what that means. By collecting robust narratives, identifying underlying characteristics within those narratives, and constructing a framework of understanding for their interactions, this research fulfills the phenomenological agenda of communicating to the reader something that the reader has likely not experienced and to reveal aspects of that experience that have not yet been critically examined.

Among the options available within the phenomenological tradition, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) represents the best technique to facilitate and take full advantage of the influence of the researcher's presence in the co-production of the research, as it explicitly accounts for the role of interpretation in the analytical process. IPA has its theoretical foundations in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2010). In the sense that IPA research involves collecting rich descriptions of participants' experiences, it is a phenomenological undertaking. Phenomenologically, then, IPA provides descriptions of a phenomenon from different perspectives, rendering those perspectives intelligible through reflective reading, and cobbling together a core body of characteristics constituting the essence of a phenomenon. In terms of hermeneutics, IPA explores the meaning a group of people hold about an experience they have had. IPA assumes that as

people live their lives, they actively engage in the process of meaning making through the interpretation of their experiences. Those interpretations constitute a key portion of the data collected, and this emphasis on the interpretative reveals IPA's hermeneutic orientation. IPA also mindfully coordinates the double hermeneutic in which participants interpret their experiences, and then the research interprets the participant's interpretations. The idiographic nature of IPA refers most explicitly to its characteristics as a qualitative research technique. Its focus is on elucidating the particular and generating understanding, as opposed to measuring magnitude or testing hypotheses as would take place in a quantitative approach. IPA gives primacy of place to the mindful selection of research participants so that space within the project allows for a fuller appreciation of the nuances that each research participant – including the researcher – contributes to the final results. RQ1 and RQ2 both seek to generate an explanation for a phenomenon among a particular sample population that collectively have not been the subject of research in the past, which means that this research must use a qualitative, phenomenological research method. IPA is the best fit for this research because it qualifies as qualitative and phenomenological, as well as including mechanisms for tracking the influence of the researcher in the interpretation process.

IPA shares some fundamental characteristics with discourse analysis (DA), though the two approaches diverge in their ultimate goals. Both DA and IPA conduct detailed analysis of participants' use of language to organize their narratives and to communicate their interpretations of experience. The goal of DA is to find patterns in how participants construct their narratives as a communicative act. It furthermore refrains

from drawing linkages between those communicative acts and the underlying cognitive processes participants are using to understand their experiences (Chapman & Smith, 2002). In contrast, the meaning making process is at the heart of IPA, which recognizes a “a chain of connection between embodied experience, talk about that experience and a participant’s making sense of, and emotional reaction to that experience” (Smith, 2011, p. 10). IPA attends to the linguistic features of a narrative in recognition of language as an essential medium of interpretation that occurs both *post hoc* to the participant’s experience and *in situ* to the setting of the interview itself (Murray & Holmes, 2014). So while analysis of participants’ narratives plays a key role in this research approach, that analysis must be extended beyond the narratives’ linguistic aspects in order to address the cognitive aspects of meaning making inherent in the research questions.

IPA originated from within the field of psychology, where it has become one of the most frequently used qualitative research techniques (Smith, 2010). IPA has since branched out into a broader array of social science domains (Murray & Holmes, 2014). Related to the lives of military service members in general, it has been used to explore why men enlist in the military (Miller, 2010), how Navy veterans experience post-traumatic stress disorder after service in Iraq and Afghanistan (Riffle, 2014), ethical and legal challenges faced by British veterans of the war in Iraq (McGarry, Mythen, & Walklate, 2012), the role of abusive violence perpetrated by American soldiers in Iraq (Tsukayama, 2014), and how former members of the Irish Republican Army understood the post-conflict environment in Northern Ireland (Burgess, Ferguson, & Hollywood, 2007). IPA, however, appears yet to have penetrated the field of feminist security studies

to any degree comparable to its penetration of other areas of inquiry. For instance, *Security Dialogue*, *The International Feminist Journal of Politics*, and *Politics & Gender* – the three most active academic journals promoting scholarship in feminist security studies (Stern & Wibben, 2014) – revealed no use of IPA. In summary, though it appears little ground has been laid for the use of IPA to address a topic directly related to the research here, research using IPA on tangential topics informed this methodology. Of prime importance to the methodology of this research is Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (2009) provides a thorough treatment of the IPA method, enhanced by refinements to the technique present in the research literature. Adherence to a well-established method such as IPA contributes to what Morse et al. call "methodological coherence" (2002, p. 14), which they argue ensures a proper fit between the research question and the means used to explore it. This congruence can assist the researcher in monitoring the research's validity and reliability – concepts that while not generally associated with the qualitative research tradition as a whole play a significant role in research approaches, such as feminist phenomenology, where the researcher's experience is understood to subsidize the analytical process and where ontology is acknowledged as polyvalent and subjective.

### **Sample**

IPA requires the collection of rich narrative texts as well as detailed analysis within and between samples. Therefore, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) warn against using a sample size that is too large. An IPA study including too many participants or too much data per participant can overwhelm the analysis process and hinder, rather than

support, the research findings. In terms of the numbers of participants, the authors propose a range of sample sizes depending on the function of the research. They recommend four to ten participants at the doctoral level. This research relies upon ten interviews of eight participants, where two participants were interviewed in two settings.

All participants must have been combat veterans identifying as women who have served as military interrogators in a deployed environment sometime after September 11, 2001. Selected participants needed to be no longer operationally active in the military – a characteristic intended to ensure they have had time to process their experiences and also to mitigate the risk of the research revealing ongoing operational information not releasable to the public. Having a homogenous sample is significant to IPA for several reasons. First, IPA produces deep descriptions of a tightly bounded group in order to define the parameters of a phenomenon under study. In this respect, it bears some similarities to ethnographic research, which investigates a specific cultural group in great detail (Fetterman, 2010). This similarity extends as well to IPA's lack of interest within a single study to produce generalizable knowledge, although comparisons across studies within a body of research can achieve this effect (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Smith & Eatough, 2007). Unlike ethnography's interest in describing the inner functions of a culture, of course, IPA – as a phenomenological method – seeks to reveal the essence of a lived experience (Creswell, 2007). Homogeneity within the sample also distinguishes IPA from grounded theory (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), which emphasizes the importance of contrasting data sources during the process of theory generation (Chamaz, 2006).

Secondly, the more closely participants share knowledge of the research phenomenon, the more efficiently and accurately the researcher can identify saturation in the data (Morse et al., 2002). Saturation is a concept usually associated with grounded theory, the goal of which is to reach a point where the data offer no additional insight into a category of information (Creswell, 2007). While not using the term ‘saturation’ explicitly, IPA stresses the importance of ‘thematic density, whereby a research theme is as firmly in the data as possible so that the boundaries between the data and the researcher’s own interpretations can be better identified (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015; Morse et al., 2002). In a study involving four to eight participants, thematic density is achieved when the theme appears in the data from at least half of the research participants (Smith, 2010). In this sense, homogeneity within the sample supports the research’s verification and reliability.

Given how specifically the sample was defined for this research, it appeared initially that it would be difficult to identify eight participants. This, however, turned out not to be the case. During preliminary conversations with friends and colleagues, several qualifying individuals expressed a great deal of interest in participating in the research and readily volunteered to be interviewed. As the research progressed, these early volunteers discussed the project with other women interrogators, leading additional potential participants to request they be allowed to participate in the research. In fact, it quickly became evident that the researcher had to decline offers from eligible individuals lest the data become overwhelming and stifle the data analysis process. Given this dynamic, a snowballing approach was used to gather a pool of potential participants. The



researcher began interviews with people he already knew and, working outward, conducted frequent reviews of the results of the semi-structured interviews to ensure the data would achieve thematic density.

This approach resulted in the eight participants of this research. All eight women had experience as uniformed military interrogators during at least one deployment in Iraq, with one participant also having experience as a civilian interrogator working for the military in Afghanistan. While over half of the participants were simultaneously deployed between 2005 and 2006, from 2001 through 2009 at least one of the participants was actively serving as an interrogator in Iraq or Afghanistan. Several of the participants had experience with other forms of HUMINT collection, specifically HUMINT source operations, which function for MI similarly to how law enforcement officers use networks of informants to acquire information on criminal activity. For the purposes of this research, participants were requested instead to focus their narratives on their interrogation experiences. Collectively they served in both tactical, crisis management environments in which the goal of their mission was to address short-term intelligence requirements through fast-paced interrogations often conducted with a detainee only once or twice, and strategic environments in which the goal was to fulfill intelligence requirements contributing to long-term planning through thorough relationship building with a detainee over a period of several months. In addition to their initial experiences as entry-level interrogators, some of the participants eventually served in leadership positions, supervising other interrogators and managing day-to-day operations. All served as linguists as part of their duties as HUMINTers, so that in addition to being fluent

English speakers, the participants collectively spoke Arabic, Persian-Farsi, Pashto, Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin Chinese.

### **Instrument**

The semi-structured interview is the most effective data collection instrument for IPA thanks to the method's emphasis on the co-production of knowledge emerging from a position of rapport and empathy between the researcher and the respondent (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In terms of the length of the individual interviews, the Smith, Flowers, and Larken (2009) recommend interviews of approximately 90 minutes involving six to ten open-ended questions. The ten questions, organized according to Research Question are listed in Appendix A. Research questions 1A and 2A directly prompted the participant to respond to the core questions of this research. The additional questions attempted to explore the boundaries of their respective aspects of the research.

In crafting the wording of my questions I purposefully avoided using the term "female interrogator", with which participants would be much more familiar from their military experience, to reinforce throughout the tone of the interview a more holistic approach to participants' gender and their gendered experiences than that which is traditionally framed by the military context. Also, interrogators are usually highly proficient at a particular type of questioning technique that relies upon a presumptive framing of inquiries. So, instead of "Did you ever have a time when you felt being a woman interrogator was a challenge? If so, how did you deal with the situation?" should 'properly' be stated, "How did you deal with a situation in which you felt being a woman interrogator was a challenge?" This questioning technique appears to derive from praxis

within the field placing interrogatives as the keystone of questioning HUMINT sources. As the Army HUMINT Field Manual explains: “Direct questions are basic questions normally beginning with an interrogative (who, what, where, when, how or why) and requiring a narrative answer. They are brief, precise and simply worded to avoid confusion” (Department of Defense, 2006, p. 9-1). The researcher is a former interrogator, and recognizes that he will likely have to negotiate participants’ challenging his phrasing. As a researcher, however, he is more comfortable with the possibility that participants may question his credibility as an interrogator than with inadvertently producing information through presumptive phrasing of interview questions.

### **Data Collection**

The interviews collected from each participant range between 75 and 120 minutes, with an average length of 90 minutes. The established interview instrument relied upon open ended questions, with conduct follow-up questioning as appropriate in order to develop the richness of participant responses. Reflective listening was used in order to demonstrate the researcher’s active engagement with the participants, to encourage participants to elaborate, and to ensure the research accurately understood the participants’ intended meanings. Reflective listening involves restating the content or the emotion of an interlocutor in order to reflect the essence of the other person’s communication (Katz & Lawyer, 1992).

After establishing informed consent – which included informing the participants that their interviews would contribute to a publicly available, unclassified research product – the researcher verified that the participant identified as a woman interrogator.

He then asked the participant to describe her background related to her military training and interrogation experience. In addition to collecting basic information about the participant's standpoint regarding the research topic, the researcher used this opportunity to establish rapport. Because all participants either had a pre-existing acquaintance with the researcher or another participant had already recommended the researcher, rapport was not difficult to establish. In cases where the researcher and the participant did not already know each other, the researcher explaining his interest in the topic of women interrogators, conveying his own background as a military interrogator, or opening a discussion about common experiences among military interrogators most easily established rapport. Once rapport was established, the researcher transitioned into the interview by asking the first interview question.

During data collection for IPA research, the researcher is encouraged to varying from the interview instrument. Variation may be appropriate in order to explore an aspect of the participant's narrative of particular interest to the research question or because the participant embarks upon a subject corresponding to a question that would otherwise appear further into the interview. Additionally, strict adherence to a pre-planned interview schedule places too much emphasis on the researcher's preconceived ideas of the interview's content and does not adequately reflect the contribution of the participant in shaping the direction of the interview (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Also, feminist approaches to qualitative research tend to favor interviews more as a dialogue between the participant and the researcher rather than a situation where the participant is the sole transmitter of personal information that the researcher then harvests (Gubrium &

Holstein, 2002). For these reasons, the researcher attempted to maintain a conversational tone throughout the interview, regularly adapting the prepared interview schedule based on the topic at hand. While participants initially responded directly to questions early in the interview, as they became more comfortable with the interview process they increased the depth of their description and took increasing initiative to open up new areas of discussion. The overall tone of the interviews also shifted from being more formal to being more relaxed, with participants often making jokes or using vulgar language with increasing ease to communicate their ideas. In these respects, the primary goal of the researcher was to sponsor a permissive environment for open and safe conversation. The most frequent reason why the researcher injected a question during the early part of the interview was to ensure clarity in the interview review by articulating the full terms usually referred to by acronyms. Military culture in general, and HUMINT specifically, relies upon a large vocabulary of acronyms used to express complex phrases efficiently. The researcher, however, wanted to ensure the transcript clearly articulated the meanings of these acronyms so that others unfamiliar with them could follow the discussion accurately.

IPA requires participant interviews be transcribed prior to conducting data analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The initial research plan included three methods to be used for recording interviews: first, a LiveScribe Smart Pen to capture an audio recording of the interviews; second, Dot Paper notebooks accompanying the LiveScribe Pen to synchronize written notes with the pen's audio recording and store them digitally; and third, a digital recorder with stereo microphones to ensure a clear,

redundant audio copy of the interview. After the first interview, however, it became clear that the pen recorded audio more than sufficiently in terms of quality and the addition of a second recording device appeared to distract the participant in a way that the pen did not. Therefore, the back-up audio recorder was no longer used. The audio recordings and digital notes were transferred to LiveScribe Desktop, a software program that organized the interviews by automatically placing each interview into a distinct file and facilitated access to the files for the purposes of transcription and data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher transcribed each interview himself as it was completed. Conducting the researcher's own transcription, as opposed to outsourcing it to a third party, provides an additional layer of protection to preserve the anonymity of the participants and to doubly ensure the information's appropriate level of 'releasability' (meaning the absence of classified or operational information) prior to it leaving the researcher's positive control. Transcriptions are necessary for IPA as data analysis includes close readings of the semantics of the interview as much as the content (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Transcriptions are not, however, required to represent thick descriptions of the non-verbal and paralinguistic cues (Smith, Larkin, & Flower, 2009), such as one might see in the Jeffersonian model of transcription (Gibbs, 2007; Rapley, 2007). In general, the researcher will follow Poland's guidelines for transcribers, which prescribes that the transcription provide a verbatim record of the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee (Poland, 2002). Major shifts in speech, such as long pauses, mimicking voices, laughter, etc., necessary for understanding the meaning of a

sentence were indicated in brackets. Garbled and overlapping speech was also noted in brackets. Additional orthographic indicators signaled other important parts of speech as appropriate, such as hyphens for interrupted speech, capitalization for emphasis, and so forth. In cases where participants referred to specific locations or individuals by name, the researcher replaced all but the first letter of the location or name with dashes and shifted the remaining letter to another letter in the alphabet. This was done to preserve the flow of the interviews without revealing potentially sensitive information that had no bearing on the purpose of the research.

The analysis involved multiple readings of the interview texts, starting with each interview individually as its transcription was completed and moving back and forth between and within interviews as the body of data grew. The first reading was a free reading with the intent for the researcher to immerse himself in the texts and contexts of the participant interaction. Reading over the entire body of transcripts several times without the agenda to notate or otherwise mark the texts helped the researcher develop a sense of their structures, chronologies, and relationships, which facilitated the next stage of analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Stage Two of IPA is the Initial Noting Stage where the researcher approached each text individually through three cycles of reading and notation: the descriptive cycle, the linguistic cycle, and the conceptual cycle. The researcher began by setting up a word processing document with a table arranged in four columns for the transcribed text, the descriptive notations, the linguistic notations, and the conceptual notations, in order from left to right. During the descriptive cycle the researcher read through the transcript and

provided descriptive notes that briefly answered the question, “What does the text say here?” The intention of these notes is simply to establish a raw topical framework for the text and identifying what the participant finds explicitly significant about the message they are trying to communicate rather than to analyze underlying meanings or relationships (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

The linguistic cycle focuses on the semantics of the transcript as a reflection of the participant’s use of language to convey meaning (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Relevant shifts in speech or other attributes of the text that were noted using an adapted notation technique known as the Scientific Content Analysis developed by Dr. Avinoam Sapir of the Laboratory for Scientific Interrogation (Sapir, 2005). Known as SCAN, this technique is commonly used in HUMINT and law enforcement to identify indicators of deception in written texts produced both by those involved in criminal investigations or intelligence inquiries. The technique traditionally calls for a trained expert to compare elements of the text against a list of indicators of obfuscation, anxiety, and creative distortions of the narrative as understood by the author. LSI SCAN has not been shown to represent as accurate a method for detecting deception as other techniques, such as Reality Monitoring (Nahari, Vrij, & Fisher, 2012). Although the researcher has been certified by Dr. Sapir since 2008 to administer SCAN for HUMINT purposes, the intent here was not to use the technique as a tool for detecting deception but as a method for organizing this research’s analysis of language and language usage in the transcripts, an area that appears poorly developed in primary texts on linguistic analysis for IPA.



The researcher's adaptation of SCAN called for two forms of notation: color-coding within the transcript, and text notations in the third column from the left. The researcher highlighted shifts in language, such as in when a participant refers to "my squad leader" and later refers to "the squad leader" when speaking of the same person, in green. These shifts may provide indicators of the participant's frame for the topic being discussed. The researcher highlighted instances of participants' explaining why something happened ("because", "since", "so", etc.) in blue. If a participant feels it is significant to verbalize an explanation, then the researcher wanted to attend to the importance of that explanation as he moved through the analysis. The researcher highlighted any instances where the participant interrupted the flow of speech, in moments of laughter or long pauses for example, in pink. These cues may – although not necessarily – indicate anxiety or an especially sincere connection to the topic being discussed. Anything that might be considered otherwise extraneous information will be highlighted in yellow. These may include negations where, for example, the participant makes a point of explicitly stating that she was not doing something in particular when in reality she was *not* doing an infinite number of things. They may also include repetitions where the context indicates the participant especially desires to communicate something in particular. Indicators of chronology, whether precise ("at 0500") or imprecise ("later on"), were highlighted in red. These codes signal timelines for related processes that may be useful during later stages of analysis. Lastly, the researcher highlighted any mention of direct communication ("said", "spoke", etc.) in gray to bring to the fore of my linguistic analysis specific statements of relationships between the participants and others in the

context of their experiences. Of all the things participants *could have said*, certain things they *will* say, and those things are worth listening to. To conclude the linguistic cycle, the researcher provided a basic interpretation of the shift in the third column from the left. The researcher did not provide an interpretation for previously highlighted selection when the linguistic cue did not hold significantly substantive meaning in the context of the text as a whole.

The third cycle of the Initial Noting is the conceptual cycle (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Here, the researcher read across all the notations and their relationships to the text of the transcript to answer the question, “What’s *really* going on here?” Unlike in the descriptive cycle, during the conceptual cycle, the researcher was specifically looking for underlying meanings even if they are not explicitly stated or even consciously understood by the participant. As Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) explain, the conceptual cycle is the first mindful move away from the participant’s raw words and into a contextualization of those words given patterns revealed during the first two cycles of Initial Noting and what the researcher brings to the table from prior research and experience. These notes were placed in the fourth column from the left. Stage Two concluded with writing up a summary of initial impressions resulting from the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual readings.

Next, the researcher went back through the text to identify themes in the conceptual readings of the transcript, using the descriptive and linguistic notations to clarify meaning and intention. This process involved numbering the concepts based on the order in which they appeared in the transcript. These numbers concepts were then

printed into small cards, which the researcher grouped similar concepts into themes, providing a short phrase to describe each theme. The concepts were then brought into the first column of a new spreadsheet, with the related quotations in the second column, and the short phrase in the third column. At times this approach forced a reconsideration of certain concepts that, while reasonable in the context of an isolated reading, appeared in the context of the whole to take on new meanings. These new meanings required a re-evaluation of the original transcript to determine if new concepts were present but not identified during the individual analysis. The result of this step was a word processing document briefly describing the researcher's interpretations of each theme, along with examples from the texts that demonstrate them. This aspect of the process purposefully maintains the raw transcripts at the center of the readings rather than displacing them in favor of secondary analytical products (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Before moving into the final stage of the analysis, the researcher sent each participant a copy of the transcript of their interview along with the document of themes and related quotations for that interview. The purpose for this step is to respond to the feminist ethic of incorporating participants as true participants of the research process and to reaffirm the continual nature of the informed consent process (Mauthner et al., 2002). Participants were asked to provide their feedback on the themes based on the initial analysis of their individual interviews. Though the researcher takes final responsibility, the results of participant reviews were incorporated into the final analysis. This feedback was used to evaluate the salience of themes derived from the researcher's interpretation and to improve the rootedness of the analysis in the participants' intended meanings.

Next, the researcher examined all themes present across all of the individual analysis to locate emergent superordinate themes shared among the participants. Looking across the individual analysis from all participants, the researcher identified superordinate themes that appear more prominent than others, as determined by the frequency of their appearance between participants, the richness of the data within the transcripts, and the salience to the research questions. The researcher then constructed a thick description of each superordinate theme (Chapter 4), explaining how it is understood through the analytical process and how it applies to the participants expressing it. As mentioned earlier, superordinate themes were only considered when at least four of the participants expressed them. To demonstrate this, specific quotes from participants accompany each superordinate theme. In order to control scope and preserve narrative coherence, only the core quotes offering the clearest demonstration of the superordinate themes were presented in the findings, with quotes providing secondary but redundant support withheld – a recommendation from the IPA methodology for research involved this number of participants.

Finally, the discussion (Chapter 5) linked the findings with the literature while answering the two research questions for this research. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) specifically warn against referencing existing literature within the findings, as findings for an IPA study must be closely connected to data and to the researcher's interpretations. References to outside sources, however, do appear in the discussion, as the intended goal is to situate the findings in the context of the broader literature. While the researcher constructed the discussion section in order to answer the research

questions, the perspectives generated by the findings demanded additional reviews of literature that had not been included in the original literature review. The presentation of new literature in the discussion is a common feature of qualitative research for the very reason that the researcher has learned something new as a result of the undertaking (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), though in this case the researcher limited the presentation of new literature to only that which resonated the most with the findings and the researcher's responses to the research questions.

### **Reflexivity and Ethics**

In order to assist the researcher and the reader in identifying the researcher's preconceived notions about the phenomenon under examination, it is important for the researcher to articulate his or her experiences as they related to the research topic. That articulation also facilitates the researcher's approaching the data during analysis with a fresh perspective gained through catharsis (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1995).

Bracketing is also essential for IPA to provide the reader with a frame of reference for the most significant influences present in the researcher's interpretations (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Since IPA is a phenomenological technique, these functions are key elements to producing findings through an analytical process that gives primacy to the contribution of the research's participants without denying the presence of the researcher in the production of knowledge (Moustakas, 1994).

I am a former HUMINTer with the United States Army who spent the first couple of years of my service specializing as an interrogator. I made this very clear to all my participants, both in the interests of full disclosure and also to assure them that as a

member of the intelligence community I value their experiences as well as their anonymity. In a practical sense, coming from a HUMINT background provides me with my own insights into the experience of becoming an interrogator, and working through some of the initial anxieties and challenges inherent in that process. While during the interviews I attempted to clarify many terms and acronyms common in this field, my being able to speak with first-hand knowledge about being in the “booth” (the interrogation room), going through “AIT” (Advanced Individual Training), or participating in “FTXs” (field training exercises) undeniably assisted in establishing a common jargon with participants. As a caution, however, I had to remain sensitive about circumstances where I was tempted to interlace interpretations of my own experiences with those of my participants’. To combat this tendency, I often broke the flow of the conversation in order to validate my understanding of what the participants were telling me – stressing again the importance of reflective listening during the interview process.

I also identify as a man. As such, I am clearly part of a group who, on the aggregate, benefits from the marginalization of women, who are the primary subjects of this research. A very real threat to research conducted by men about women’s experiences comes from what Rebecca Solnit referred to as mansplaining (Solnit, 2014), a term coined from the words ‘man’ and ‘explain’ intended to reflect the phenomenon when men explain to women the meaning behind women’s experiences. While the term itself is certainly not uncontroversial, it appears more generally applied to men who either lack or dismiss a commitment to the fundamental feminist standpoint that gender is an organizing feature of social interaction privileging masculine perspectives over feminine

ones. Not only do I openly embrace this feminist standpoint, but also this research relies on a methodology explicitly intended to account for my interpretive influence and to respect the authority of the research participants regarding their own experiences.

Through the research process I have attempted to maintain a sensitivity to the interpretations I bring to this research, part of the reason for which my research participants and I have collaborated through the data collection and analysis process.

Further, I identify as gay. As such, I have several professional experiences serving as an interrogator when I realized my personal insights about difference, identity negotiation, and impression management played a significant role in the performance of my duties with detainees whom I interrogated. In contrast and based on my personal observation, my heterosexual colleagues who come from stronger positions of social privilege in American society sometimes struggled to see alternative perspectives. I view that my awareness of my sexual identity encourages a sense of value for reflecting on the unique experiences my participants and I share regarding our gender-based minority status and our positions as military interrogators. At the same time, I am conscious of the fact that I am a man who exhibits stereotypically masculine behaviors. This characteristic means that in my life and in my career I “pass” as a heterosexual man, and therefore escape most of the negative scrutiny placed on those who exhibit more feminine traits. In most cases, my gender-based minority status is not manifested as a physically embodied phenomenon in the same way as women who outwardly appear as women, which is all of the participants of this research.

Although risks were not anticipated to be greater than the discomfort normally experienced when discussing their military experiences, three specific risks of this study were identified. Firstly, although the researcher established secure procedures to protect the identity of the participants, which may prevent potential harm, and although the likelihood of breach in confidentiality is minimal, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Secondly, all information obtained in the research has been mandatorily acknowledged as private and personal by the researcher with the exception of information deemed harmful to self or others, and related to the abuse of children or the elderly, all of which require a legal mandatory report to the pertinent authorities. Thirdly, participation in the research presented a minimal risk that psychological or emotional distress could occur because participants were asked to recall past experiences. These issues identified, interrogation as a whole - though neglecting women specifically - is already a growing subject for research in the social scientists, and military interrogators (though all men) have already released memoirs of their experiences into the public. In the researcher's estimation, the benefits outweigh potential risks.

That said, the researcher is conscious about the responsibility of safe guarding the participants' emotional, psychological and physical well-being. In recognition of these concerns, the researcher established secure procedures to protect the identity of participants, which may prevent potential harm. The likelihood of breach in confidentiality is minimal based upon the procedures to secure information. The researcher did not use actual names throughout the study, transcribed interviews in a private setting, secured all electronic recording devices, written notes, and transcriptions



containing data obtained in the research in a locked safe in his home office for which only the researcher had access, and secured all electronic data in a devoted external hard drive and a password-protected computer accessible only by the researcher. In order to protect against an invasion of the participants' privacy, the researcher acknowledged with participants that all information obtained was considered private and personal, with the exception of the above-cited information triggering a mandatory legal report to pertinent authorities. The researcher informed participants about the requirement for mandatory reporting and they were subsequently advised not to share any information they may not be comfortable sharing. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in a private, closed setting to maintain confidentiality.

The researcher informed participants that all information will be kept for a minimum of three years after the completion of the study and that recordings from the research data collection were secured in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. With the exception of the informed consent forms, all personally identifying information was removed from the data. Since anyone who hears the interviews could potentially identify participants by their voices, the researcher limited access to the interviews to members of the Institutional Review Board and the researcher's dissertation committee. Confidentiality was further reinforced with the use of pseudonyms throughout the study and in the final text of the dissertation. Lastly, since the research had to potential to request participants recall past experiences in providing responses to the semi-structured interview questions, participants had the potential during the interview process to experience some distress. The researcher informed participants of their ability to refrain

from sharing information or to discontinue participation in the research at any time. Should further help have been required for participants dealing with possible distress, the researcher provided a referral for counseling, although participants were informed that they may have to assume the full costs associated with the services sought. Likewise, participants were informed of their right to refuse to answer any particular question during the interviews.

These aspects of the researcher's approach to the research constitute the most salient features of his interpretation of the data and his process of managing risks to the participants. He has attempted throughout the research process to be sensitive to the influences of his own background, and to check his work with his participants to ensure a steady, if affected azimuth from their own experiences to the phenomenology considered here. In terms of the risk/benefits ratio for this study, women interrogators are completely excluded from the research and public dialogue about their roles in the GWOT. This study gives its participants a chance to tell their own stories without exposing themselves to undue scrutiny thanks to the mitigating procedures put in place.

## Chapter 4: Results

Interviews of the eight participants resulted in over 250 pages of transcription. These transcripts were carefully analyzed based on what participants said, how they said it, and what underlying concepts participants expressed. This process resulted in over 690 pages of analytical text identifying over 40 conceptual themes. A recursive analysis of the interviews and themes revealed four superordinate themes primarily regarding how women interrogators understand their experiences as both women and interrogators.

These themes are:

Theme 1: The integration of gender with other markers of identity

Theme 2: Recognizing gender as a context-dependent role

Theme 3: Interrogation as a complex interaction

Theme 4: The perception of women as non-threatening

The analysis also revealed three superordinate themes primarily regarding how women interrogators negotiate the socially constructed contradictions between their simultaneous identities as women and interrogators. These themes are:

Theme 5: Demonstrating technical prowess

Theme 6: Harnessing the system

Theme 7: Reflection and the development of self-awareness

These seven superordinate themes constitute the results of this research. Theme 1 frames how the participants engaged with the core approach to gender as the research's question of analysis. Theme 2, Theme 3, and Theme 4 predominantly describe key dynamics of participants' understandings of their experiences, while Theme 5, Theme 6, and Theme 7

predominantly explain how the participants exercised their agency given each of those dynamics respectively.

In the rest of this chapter, a brief description of each superordinate theme precedes representative selections from the interviews. The descriptions contain a degree of the researcher's interpretation that IPA not only allows, but demands be acknowledged (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2010). The superordinate themes' connection to the broader literature appear in the discussion section (Chapter 5) rather than in the analysis section, as per IPA requirements (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 13; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2010, p. 112). The selections corroborate their related superordinate themes through the participants' own narratives and, in many cases, the interaction of the participants with the researcher. Because a core function of this research is to serve as a forum for revealing the stories of women interrogators during GWOT, selections appear in a narrative format longer than often appears in IPA research. Participant quotes are furthermore presented with only minimal editing for clarity and context. Finally, although specific names, locations, and other identifying information have been altered or withheld to protect privacy and preserve confidentiality, the researcher has made all effort to prevent these changes from influencing substantive content.

### **Superordinate Theme 1: The Integration of Gender with Other Markers of Identity**

The first superordinate theme to be explored is how gender is integrated into other aspects of the identities of women interrogators. This integration means that isolating the influence of gender on the meaning of an experience is incredibly difficult. Theme 1 demonstrates that non-gender related intervening variables play as much a role in the

meaning-making process as gender. In practice, extracting and separating these variables often required the re-formulation of questions from the research instrument, extended periods of silent introspection, and an exploratory dialogue with the researcher.

Chloe exemplifies a common approach among participants of using the interview process itself as a venue for identifying factors influencing experiences and the relationship of those factors to gender. First, she gradually arrives through the process of discussion at the conclusion that her identity as an American played the primary role in her interaction with a specific detainee:

**Chloe.** Maybe there was this one, uh, one time, I can't quite re- he was very devoted, um, devout to his ideology. And he was very, I can't remember whether he just did not want to talk to Americans at all, or didn't want to talk to me because I was female. Um, BUT I remember that I knew it wasn't gonna work out with this detainee so that I just ruined rapport because I was going to go ahead and hand it over to the MALE interrogator. And I thought if the male interrogator would do the opposite then he would open up, but that never happened. He just HATED Americans.

**James.** Um, okay, so how did this, how did this start and then go bad?

**Chloe.** Um, he was just, he was just overall very resistant. And he didn't want to, he didn't want to talk to me because on top of it I was female.

**James.** And you think it was, I mean right off the bat he was detained and he just didn't want to talk...

**Chloe.** Yeah. He just didn't want to talk to any Americans, first of all. And then on TOP of that because I was female, he just didn't wanna talk at all.

**James.** So, so the first barrier you think was that you were actually American, you were representing America, right?

**Chloe.** Right.

**James.** And the SECOND barrier was that you were-

**Chloe.** Because I was female, I think.

Later, she attempts to distinguish how the interaction of her identity as a Korean and a non-native English speaker, her outgoing personality, and her gender identity influenced her peers' perception of her as a women interrogator. This selection begins just after she describes how her intelligence analyst made a book, "of anything stupid that I said that was so hilarious":

**James.** So do you think that, and there's really no right or wrong answer, it's really just what you think. So do you think any of that would have been different had you been a man?

**Chloe.** Um, maybe? Um, because there were other, because there were, I can't, because there were other Korean male, there were other Korean interrogators. And, but they were not as more open and outgoing as I was.

**James.** They were not as open as you are?

**Chloe.** Yeah. So I don't know if it was that? But if they were outgoing at the same level as I was, and joking around and stuff, maybe because, 'cause I'm thinking maybe because I was Asian? Because I was Korean, and-

**James.** So you feel that really the Asian thing was a bigger factor-

**Chloe.** Yeah, than being female.

Even when a participant was confident being a woman was the decisive factor in the meaning of a specific event, her explanation of that decisiveness usually (and seemingly inadvertently) referred back to other dimensions of her identity. Harriett, for example, grew up as the daughter of a working class, single-parent father. She then entered the field of interrogation at a stage in her life when she had already incorporated into her own gender performance a certain insight about masculine social roles:

I also think it comes because I was older when I joined. I wasn't 18 or right out of high school. I was 24 years old when I joined the Army. Um, so I'd had relationships with men and, ya know, been raised by a man.

Salt explained that her maturity and social skills constituted a key intervening factor in her introduction to interrogation. This introduction set the stage for how she understands her experiences since:

[M]y maturity level was not quite there. I went from high school geek that everybody laughed at and made fun of for all four years. And going further back, and I had no social life, or no social skills whatsoever, to being throw into a different country and saying, 'Okay, well these are, these are terrorists, [laughter] and we need this from you, and you have to figure out a way to do that.' So it, it was a big, taking my original timid nature and putting it in, face-to-face, I mean, I'll never forget the first day I sat in front of a real detainee.

Tammy finds that even today others perceive her conflict management style as contradicting the stereotype for interrogators. This perception, combined with her gender, generates doubts in others as to the legitimacy of her identity as an interrogator, which in turn sponsors a defensiveness of that identity:

[W]hen people first meet me or when they even know me, I'm not a very loud, aggressive, confrontational person. That's just not my personality. So I think a lot of people, you know, with my job being an interrogator, you know, I've gotten a lot of crap about, you know, 'I don't see how you could interrogator anyone. You're not scary. You don't yell at anyone.' And I've, I've often had people try to provoke me, try to get me angry, try to irritate me just to get a reaction out of me, which I, I am, it takes a long time for me to get very angry and upset and blow up. But I think a lot of people just, when I say I'm an interrogator their initial impression is that there's no way you could be an interrogator. You're not mean enough. You're not loud enough. You're not aggressive enough. You don't yell enough. And, I think, just like my personality-wise, and the fact that I, add that to the fact that I'm a female, a lot of people just don't think that I could ever be effective as an interrogator. I get that impression a lot.

### **Superordinate Theme 2: Recognizing Gender as a Context-Dependent Role**

The second superordinate theme involves the representation of gender in the experiences of women interrogators. This theme emerges as the participants hone in on the relevance of the gender variable. While retaining an emphasis on the man/woman gender dichotomy and while often articulated in terms of the male/female biological sex



dichotomy, gender appears as a factor whose specific meaning was context dependent. Furthermore, that meaning was not understood as passively emergent, but as an evolving interpretation of gender for which individuals, the Army, and, at times, society bore responsibility. Participants discussed these dynamics in terms of dyad or small group relationships, as well as their own relationships with Army units.

As in civilian life, traditional gender roles for men and women strongly influenced how soldiers interacted with each other while conducting military missions. Participants often expressed dismay at how the importance of the military mission did not always suppress the negative effects that sometimes arose as soldiers were learning to adapt their understandings of these gender roles to a military context. At times, participants attributed these negative effects to women's expressions of traditional gender roles when those expressions set women apart from the traditionally masculine military culture. Jane provides an example of such a situation that took place while her unit attended an extended field training exercise:

[Y]ou know the male soldiers they get...raunchy. [chuckle] You know? Talking about whatever it is they want to talk about in the tents and everywhere else. You know, we were all in tents together, that's where we were staying. [One female soldier] actually got offended by their conversation. I think honestly that's the only time I've had to deal with THAT in, in the military where, you know, someone actually got offended. To me, I don't, I don't take it personally. I don't get offended by it, you know, whatever. It's guys talking. I'm not gonna say, 'No! You can't talk like that because I'm around. You need to RESPECT me because

I'm a female.' I, I don't, uh, I don't get it, I, I don't know, it doesn't bother me, but she actually got bothered by it. And I just remember it was like, I don't know, the guys were all sullen and like, 'Now we can't say ANYTHING around ANYONE.' And like, 'Wait! THEY'RE around. You can't say that.' And, you know, it just became kind of asinine in that, in that regard.

At one point, Tommie stated that more women interrogators tend to leave the military due to stress than men. When asked to clarify, she dismisses the idea that women are naturally incompatible with military life in favor of the idea that leaving is simply easier than adjusting to the realities of life as an interrogator in MI.

I could give you the military answer: just 'cause they're weak. But it's not that. It's, uh, they don't understand what they're getting themselves into. And you got, you gotta think that they're out of high school or some college. There's, sometimes you'll get someone who's in their 30s and they're just, 'This is what I've decided to do with my life.' You know what I mean? And then you have the [soldiers reclassifying from another military job into MI]. Um, but when you have a brand, brand new soldier coming into MI, you know what I mean? [laughter] MI already is hard enough to deal with because you're, all the movies that are out there, all the, I mean, when I was in the schoolhouse they were, they big thing was the Abu Ghraib thing. And THAT was, everyone was like, 'All interrogators are horrible, blah, blah, blah,' you know what I mean. So we had to deal with that. But NOW they don't, that was so long ago for them, they don't even know what the heck you're talking about. And when you're trying to explain to them that you

are going to get a lot of crap for being an interrogator, and everything else that goes along with it, being in the military and having to be [sigh] for me I, I explain to them that, 'You're a soldier. You have to understand that being an interrogator does that mean that you're sitting behind a desk all the time. You are outside the wire. I did this mount patrol, I did this mount patrol, I was a gunner, I was,' you know what I mean. The 50-cal[iber rifle] was my weapon during my last deployment. You know what I mean? [chuckle]

At other times, however, participants attributed the negative effects to men soldiers' inability to acclimatize their approach to interacting with women soldiers. Harriett tells a story of her frustrations toward a group of men soldiers who did not take her seriously when she attempted to deliver a critical piece of intelligence to a military decision-maker:

[W]hatever this thing was, there was no time to report it. The colonel was going to get on a helicopter and somebody important, like some major or colonel or whoever, it was information that needed to go right to the colonel. And my Warrant Officer told me, 'Okay, just TAKE it over there.' And I was still only like, an E-3 or E-4 at the time. And again it's still the ridiculousness of I was really small and everything I had on was too big. And me kinda of trudging up to these men who looked like a poster for an Army recruiter. They have on all the gear, they've got shades, they've got- There were two of them there and giving them this information and saying, 'Hey', ya know, 'Here's what this says, and it's kind of time sensitive.' And them just going, 'All right, yeah.' And, ya know,

kind of, 'Thank you little girl.' And not really hearing what I was saying. And just kind of shaking my head as I walked back. And my Warrant Officer - who's a man - asked me, uh, you know, 'What did they say?' And I made the joke, I said, 'Well they said something like 'My penis is bigger.' 'No, MY penis is bigger.' [laughter] And, huh, he just started lau- he thought it was hilarious. He said 'You're mean.' I said, 'I AM mean, but,' I said, 'that man didn't listen to what I said, ya know?' ...Um, but, yeah, no matter how much there's a quote-unquote masculine aspect or a one-of-the-guys aspect of my personality, it's still weird to sit and watch guys play at war, or play at Army, or anything because it's just so, it's just different because masculinity is different from femininity. Just the performance is different and it seems silly and oftentimes inefficient to women. [laughter]

Whereas Harriett comments on how the adaption of gender roles influenced what should have been a peer-to-peer relationship, Jane offers insight into how this dynamic unfolded with a man interrogator who was her subordinate:

This ONE guy was just kind of a problem child. And he, uh, you know, like, 'Hey, you need to do this.' 'No I don't know. I'll do what I WANT to do.' That kind of thing. And I got a lot of push back from him. And, uh, you know, doing, doing training, we did a lot of training to get prepared to go up into, into Iraq. And he was always kind of, um, 'Well \*I\* know what we should be doing. YOU don't know what you're talking about.' That kind of thing. He took me aside one day when we were in Iraq and he, he said, you know, he told me about how his mother

was very strict and so he has a problem with women authority figures. And he got, yeah, and I was like, “Whoa! Whoa!” We’re.... Yeah, I had the position of team leader but I don’t look at myself, I’m the, the dictator, you’ll do what I say, that kind of thing. I’ve, I’ve never been that way. It kind of, I was kind of taken aback you know. Like, ‘What? Where is THIS coming from?’ And sure enough when we got into Iraq, too, he had kind of the same issues. And maybe it was my leadership style, that I wasn’t a very authoritative type person, it was kind of, I don’t like to micromanage. I mean, hey, if you’re doing the wrong thing I guess I, at some point I need to, I need to STOP that, or, you know, let you know. Um, but for the most part I let people do their thing. And, uh, it seems to work. Right? But, uh, yeah, he just kind of, uh, after that I was like, ‘Whoa! Whoa! Where’s this coming from?’

Jane was initially self-conscious about whether her own leadership style was compatible with her team’s needs. She later, however, assigned full responsibility to her subordinate’s failure to manage his personal issues with women authority figures in his professional setting.

Military units during GWOT attempted to incorporate women interrogators into missions based on units’ preliminary assumptions about how the role of women in traditional Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian cultures would translate into the local populations’ reactions to women interrogators. Those assumptions often did not survive when they conflicted with the expediencies of critical mission objectives. This conflict often led to a re-evaluation of the units’ approach strategies. When Shannon’s unit went

into Afghanistan shortly after 9/11, her leadership informed her and another woman interrogator, both Pashto speakers, that they would be performing a document exploitation mission instead of conducting interrogations due to the unit's belief that Afghan men would not speak to women. However:

**Shannon.** They showed up with this guy, and they were, there was a team from our unit that was there, all men, but none of them had the language. So they came to me and said, 'You need to talk to this guy.' And I said, 'But I'm not allowed, I'm not allowed.' So they're like, 'No, you need to talk to this guy.' [laughter] So I did. And, you know, the world didn't end, and...[laughter]

**James.** Yeah. [laughter] So what DID happen? Was that, did that signal a change? I think you referred to earlier how that was maybe a changing point to your unit's position on this.

**Shannon.** It was. I would say that was THE changing point, um, because they saw that regardless- I think that they were under the impression that a man simply would not talk to a female period.

Natasha deployed to Iraq during the initial invasion in 2003. While she was the only woman interrogator in her unit, she was also the only Arabic speaker in the brigade, providing her unit little choice but to allow her to perform her duty function. As with other participants, she soon found that the local population's reaction to her being a soldier, a woman, and an American afforded her a unique standpoint in the context of her mission:

**Natasha.** I wasn't actually a woman in the full woman sense.

**James.** You know, what do you mean by that?

**Natasha.** Uh, I was never relegated to just womanhood. Um, do I have to keep all my examples interrogation related or can it be in the country and with-

**James.** No, go ahead.

**Natasha.** Um, so we would go into towns and there would be the men having the important men meeting and the women were off having the, you know, the woman meeting. And I would walk in and, uh, you know, I'd be with a few guys. Generally, when we would go to something notable, and, you know, the leaders, I would always direct to the senior leader and he'd go, 'Oh, the women are over there.' And I'd say, 'No thanks. I prefer to join.' And he'd go, 'I just figured you'd be more comfortable. You're certainly welcome.' And there was never, it was, 'I acknowledge that you are a female,' but, you know, I, I call it the uniform but of course that's my assumption. Nobody told me that. I was never expected to BE the woman. 'Oh you're different.' And I accepted that. You know, 'You're different. You're American.' And sometimes, 'We know how you are.'

Natasha eventually gained referent power and decision-making authority beyond her rank while also benefitting from men soldiers' belief they had to extend her courtesy as a woman. This dynamic fluctuated, however, as women became more common in her area of operations, and therefore change the contextual dynamics:

You know we talked about the people, we talked, we talked about the dudes we'd talked to, what was going on, the people we'd talk to next, but never any, uh, you know 'Now here's what you should do.' I mean sometimes I'd asked advice like,

‘Okay we’re gonna do this, visit that guy again.’ But it was more PLANNING rather than advice or personal suggestions. Just because, well, and I would say, and I don’t mean to be egoistical about this, but I’m the only one who did what I did. The rest of them were with me because I couldn’t be alone. Um, so they got incorporated as, you know, my partner, the guy that I worked with, you know, he’s a senior so-and-so, once we started to have to wear rank again. It was, you know, well you see, he’s senior to me, and I would do some deferential something to prove that there was somebody to report to. Whatever...I was cared for a lot. Not cared for in my role as an interrogator or where I was going, but, you know, I was seen as a, or treated as someone who gets taken care of more than the other male, I’m gonna say soldiers, ‘cause, you know, depending on what role they were filling, some of them made sure that, you know, things were taken care of. They just kind of cared for. I was the one getting things done, and so they would care for me because I was the girl, you know, make sure that things- ‘Do you need me to go out there and get you some things?’ ‘Yeah, go out there and get me some bread and some stuff.’ Things like that. The second half when it became more formalized and it was more of the soldierly, you know, life, things, you know, slowly went back to the way they should be. Where I was just one of the other, you know, sergeants who were going about their business. Cause there were a lot more women on base at that time...[Y]ou know with formality, you know, the specialist in me lost more and more control over the situation, but as we were on



our own, as the formalization happened they established, you know, a location. So we would go back out to where we still had that sort of, you know, control.

Over time and in both Iraq and Afghanistan, being a woman became viewed as less of a personal characteristic – or, perhaps more accurately, a liability – and more of a quality in an interrogator that could be leveraged to support operations. As Harriett explains:

**Harriett.** [I]f you get into a situation where they're going to take a female target you're going to go. As the female interrogator you're going to go. Uh, for much of those same reason we spoke about in the training exercises. They're petrified for American men to interact with Iraqi women.

**James.** So in THAT case, for like, taking down targets, it almost seems like being a woman became like being an Arabic linguist, became like being a skill identifier.

**Harriett.** Yes! Yes! Yeah, like, 'Okay, you,' like, 'you're the lady...'

**James.** You have that quality. We need a left-handed [laughter] gunner...

**Harriett.** Right!

**James.** And you happen to have the left handed...

**Harriett.** Yeah. You're a lady - she's a lady...And I think a lot of times when, uh, and this is [sighs] that there were times when children were detained. And I think, uh, I think you're more likely to get brought face-to-face with a child detainee if you're a woman interrogator.

**James.** Interesting.

**Harriett.** And in that case I don't think it's because they think, 'Oh, they'll talk to a woman more. They'll, uh, she can turn on the mom thing and,' ya know?

**James.** You DON'T think it's that?

**Harriett.** I DON'T think it's that as much as it's the fear that...a male interrogator not being able to adjust for fire.

**James.** What do you mean, 'adjust for fire'?

**Harriett.** Not being able to say, 'This is a kid I'm interrogating,' as opposed to, and adjusting his interrogation, or his level of, for lack of a better word, intimidation. I think it's the fear that, um, they won't see a child in front of them. I think there's a belief that a woman interrogator will never get to the point where she doesn't see a child.

The exact effect of 'womanhood' often remained understood in the context of traditional gender roles. For example, participants recognize that the professional context of the military does not inherently preclude romantic relationships between military service members in the work place. As Shannon explained when asked about her relationships with other members of the military:

Um, I mean I HAVE had relationships with people that I worked with. Um, and...Yeah. Um, and I don't really think it affected, um, [long pause] I, that- you know, if we stopped seeing each other for like a little while there might be a little bit of weirdness. [chuckle] But we'd get over it fairly quickly. Because we worked together prior, you know, we had that. Normally we'd have like all the

same friends anyways and you know you can't get away from people and it's- whatever, it is what it is.

Other participants feel less comfortable with such relationships, and feel that they undermine a woman's professional credibility. From Jane's perspective:

That has to do with being a female in the military. And there's, you see women obviously that become very promiscuous and whatever else when they're in the military, and it's kind of like, I don't know, they use the military as a way to find a man, or something. But for me, I, I kind of had the opposite. Uh, well, no, I want to be seen as a professional. Someone who does my job well, and I'm not going to fall into this, uh, [sigh] I don't know. Especially the younger girls I feel that a lot of times they don't necessarily have an identity so they take on this identity of, uh, [sigh] you know. They're, they're the ones who are going out on dates all the time, and whatever else that entails. Versus, you know, someone who's more mature and decides, 'No. I'm a professional and look at me as a professional, not as, you know, someone to date.' So I, I think there is that, that contradiction. You know, I think it's, it's something you see all the time.

An understanding of heterosexual gender social scripts included the idea that women interrogators could access romantic and sexual social scripts by virtue of being women, and could manipulate those scripts to achieve mission objectives by virtue of being interrogators. Chloe, for example, deployed to Iraq during the later years of the GWOT. Prior to her deployment, she was told that women interrogators have more

advantage when interrogating Middle Eastern men than men interrogators. When asked what the reason was, she responded:

I THINK it was, I mean they didn't go into detail. They didn't explain any further, but, um, I think it was just, everybody would know that they would talk to a female because, because it's a male, because males like to talk to females, I guess. It could be like a sexual flirtation thing. At the same time that women as viewed less threatening to those detainees, and so that's that. And of course they could be, they could be talking about from THEIR experience they found that female interrogators were doing, which, um, somebody actually told me that, that, um, female interrogators actually did BETTER compared to MALE interrogators. So, THAT I was told...[M]y coworker, every time when they, when he talks to [a specific detainee], he would come to me and tell me that, 'Hey my detainee,' like, 'If you pass by us, like, whenever, if you could just say, 'hi', to him because he likes it. Like it makes him happier.' So, um, things like that happened.

All participants distinguish between flirtation and sexual exploitation. Participants view some level of flirtation as a perfectly common frame of interaction between men and women, although it comes with the risk of devolving into a frame that, at best, undermines the professional credibility of the woman interrogator and, at worst, constitutes sexual abuse. Tammy explains it as a balance that is the responsibility of the woman interrogator to strike:

Well I think, I think that you will, it's fine to be like, like I, be flirtatious, be friendly, be nice. But I think in the same respect you also have to maintain, um, an

authority. You, you still have to maintain the fact that you're there as a professional. That you're doing a job, and that you're in charge of the situation. And that you are, uh, you're basically in control of, you know, that detainee's case. You're the one in charge. You have to balance that with trying to be nice, trying to, if you're gonna be flirtatious with the detainee, particularly flirtatious to try to maintain that balance is where it becomes difficult. And, but making sure that you maintain the balance obviously is important.

When asked to explain where the line is between flirtation and sexual exploitation, Jane's perspectives reflect those of the participants as whole:

**Jane.** I wouldn't get into anything sexual, like, uh, talking about sexual things, or anything like that. But if they're laughing and joking and it's easier for them to do that with a female than it would be with a man, or if they're very emotional or they're crying or they're very upset, and they can do that with a man, THAT's ONE thing. Talking about, 'Oh, yeah, maybe I'll come back later on tonight' or whatever. No! That's unprofessional. That's, uh, I guess there's, yeah, it's hard to make that distinction of what exactly, you know, where is that clear cut line. It's not clear cut. We deal with HUMAN beings, right? We deal with people. So, but to me, it's, if I feel like I'm being disrespected or looked at as something other than a professional, then that's the line for me.

**James.** Now, um, you said [earlier], 'Use what you've got.' And as you know there have been some women interrogators who have taken that to sort of sexual extremes.

**Jane.** Right. Yeah.

**James.** What about that part?

**Jane.** Honestly, that, uh, that makes me angry. Again, to ME, I want to be seen as a professional above all else. I don't care if I'm a male, female, whatever. I am a professional interrogator. And when someone uses a tactic like that, that's not professional. That's, uh, unless you're a prostitute or something. [laughter]

**James.** Unless you're a professional...[laughter] Okay.

**Jane.** Right. That, that IS a profession I guess. [laughter] Not OUR profession.

Uh, and so to me that just, uh, it does, it makes me angry, it makes me, uh, [sigh]...I've had, I've had other females come up to me in the past, like we had a warrant officer that came through last year around this time that said, 'You know, I really appreciate the fact that you are so professional. You're one of the most professional females that I've run across in the military. Or in this environment.' And to me that's like the greatest compliment I could ever receive. And so something like THAT. I think it makes us ALL look bad. And you're gonna hear about, that's, that's newsworthy. You know, 'Oh that's what FEMALE interrogators do to get information.' No. It's not. That's a couple of EXTREME cases they used that. And it's, if you can't get information in a better way than that, then you probably shouldn't have this job. That's, that's kind of my, my thought on it.

### **Superordinate Theme 3: Interrogation as a Complex Interaction**

The third superordinate theme is the representation of interrogation as a complex interaction composed of diverse, interdependent actors, all adapting their behaviors based on the behaviors of others and the environment in which they are located. Interrogation is often represented as a dyad conflict between an interrogator and a detainee. This representation, however, does not correspond to how women interrogators experience becoming and being interrogators. Following indoctrination into the military, women interrogators are socialized into the distinct culture of MI, practice their trade in a variety of conditions, and refine their skills and abilities in concert with many other actors whose influence often goes unacknowledged.

Becoming a woman interrogator starts in training, where instructor role players act as detainees in situational training exercises. How role players represent members of a local population and replicate their reactions to a woman interrogation depends heavily on the role players' own experiences and, often, prejudices. As Tammy explains, this performance was usually the first exposure a woman interrogator had to interrogation operations in Iraq and Afghanistan:

Honestly, when I, when I went through a lot of them were just difficult. And I can't say it's just toward females. [chuckle] Everybody had a real difficult time. [chuckle] But I know like I'm sure in some aspects like I said they'd just say, 'You're a female. I don't wanna talk to you.' You know, 'You don't...I only wanna talk to a man,' or whatever. And I think in that aspect they were trying to prepare us or you know expose us to what we might face down range with

societies and cultures that DON'T want to talk to women. But I mean [laughter] honestly for some of that training, they just wanted to be difficult...I think that more than anything it really made me paranoid, and kind of terrified me of what things I might face interrogating people. And from my experience, like I said, \*I\* 've never had a detainee try to attack me. They've never stole my notebook. They've never picked up chairs and ran out of the booth. They've never, you know, been as verbally hostile as...I would have to say, you know, 99% of the crazy stuff that I experienced in training was nothing like I experienced down range. Most of the, for the most part the detainees, I don't know if I'd say it's respectful, but they definitely weren't threatening me, you know, verbally or physically, you know. So I'd have to say that my experience was, were for the most part not a lot like training as far as their ridiculous, crazy antics they [the role players] would do that basically had me paranoid. Like the first few times I went into the booth I'm just waiting for the detainee to try to attack me, waiting for them to scream at me, waiting for him to, you known, turn his chair around and not talk. The whole- I mean they [the role players] just did crazy stuff like that that I NEVER experienced down range, ever.

Harriett tells a specific story about how role players during a field training exercise prevented her from demonstrating her proficiency as an interrogator based on the role players' decision to represent the local population as hostile to a woman:

**Harriett.** We walked into a situation where the role player, role player townspeople were offended by our presence and THEIR spokesman and OUR



spokesman, um, were being very masculine. It came to that point, um, and the guy who, in our group who was on point, walked away. And I'm not saying that he was going to do something terrible, um, but we had come to the point where we weren't going to be able to collect any information, which affects your score, uh, you gotta get out of this training, right? [chuckle] Um, and so I stepped up and said, ya know, we didn't mean any problems and I kinda, it was kind of like a wrestling match. I tapped in, ya know?

**James.** Right.

**Harriett.** To say, 'Hey', ya know, 'nobody meant anything by this' to try and diffuse the situation and the role player, um, started to antagonize this guy even more about, 'You let your women talk for you,' and 'You do this,' and this very kind of ridiculous cartoon cultural interpretation of a male domination culture. Right?

**James.** [chuckle] Right.

**Harriett.** Um, and it was, again it was stupid because what I was doing was right. And in ANY situation in a normal situation with actual human beings, would've worked. [laughter] But again, it's this cartoon interpretation of-

**James.** It's like a caricature?

**Harriett.** And I think - yes! - and I find it so disturbing that, and I'm not saying that there aren't issues with women's rights in the Middle East and in some other cultures. [chuckle] Please do not mistake me. [chuckle] Please do not get the impression that I am not grateful to be a woman born in America. Right? But it's

the impression that women live, are kept in a hole in the basement, chained to the wall, that they never, that they can go their whole life and never speak. [laughter] Their voices never heard. Right? [chuckle] And it just seems so ridiculous to me.

Participants often found that during training their identities as women represented an inherent contradiction to being an interrogator. Stereotypically feminine behaviors, for example, were held out as proof of how women were ill-suited to the job. As Shannon describes:

**Shannon.** Well, there was one time in AIT that I did feel that it was different, and I will admit that I cried in the booth one time. [chuckle]

**James.** Okay. [Laughter]

**Shannon.** [Laughter] I did! I cried. And at THAT point I was like, ‘None of the GUYS are crying!’ [Laughter] So it was like, ‘I’m such a GIRL!’ Um, so yeah, there’s that, but other than that, you know, not really, um, until, eh, the first deployment when we were told, ‘No, you don’t get to do your job because you’re female.’ I think up until that point none of us ever really expected to be in a real interrogation.

After graduating from the interrogation training school, women interrogators go to their military units where their leadership evaluates their fitness for various duty positions during actual operations, which in many respects determines where a woman interrogator will be assigned. Army officers concern themselves with planning and management rather than conducting interrogations. Therefore, they are rarely trained as interrogators or linguists, which can degrade their ability to make judgments of women

interrogators' performance based on direct observation. Chloe describes one such experience where she was conducting a practice interrogation in Korean with a soldier from the Republic of Korea (ROK):

**Chloe.** So I remember one time I was just cussing. [laughter] Like I was just literally just cursing at this one ROK, this, um, soldier. [laughter] And he was not, he was NOT happy even after the training.

**James.** [laughter] No, no kidding!

**Chloe.** Yeah. But [laughter] I remember that the majors and captains were watching. Because I was yelling they thought I was doing well. They were like, 'Dang she's good! Right?' Without understanding what I was actually saying, [laughter] I was just cursing. [laughter] I was just saying, 'You mother fucker, you better tell me! You fucking bitch you better tell me right now!' [laughter] That's all I was saying. [laughter] But, uh, but, and then I think at the same time they thought I was doing well because-

**James.** Because you were yelling? [laughter]

**Chloe.** I was female!

**James.** Oh, because you were yelling and you were female?

**Chloe.** Yeah, and then them NOT understanding.

**James.** It also sounds like what you're saying was that there's a problem with your leadership understanding what's a good interrogation and what's not. They're basically, if you're yelling, well that's a plus. Like right off the bat that's a plus.

**Chloe.** Yeah! Yeah, because in the movies that's what they do. And they're not interrogators so of course that's what they're going to think. [laughter]

The valorization of aggressive interrogation strategies could put pressure on women interrogators to adopt these behaviors even when their effectiveness was doubtful if not lacking. Jane provides one such example:

**Jane.** In my first deployment I had a, uh, another female interrogator on my team. And she was younger. She was, uh, I think she turned, I think she turned 21 while in Iraq...But I remember she would get loud sometimes, you know. She'd, uh, just being in the booth with her, she took a lot of what that other female interrogator - the one with all the experience - had said. I think she took a little more of that to heart kind of at the beginning especially. And, uh, the one time I just remember walking by her booth outside and she was yelling so loud you could hear here, you know, walking outside. And, uh, we were in like these trailer things. And, uh, SHE was loud. We'll, we'll put it that way. And our, our command - we had a WO1 [Warrant Officer] that was in charge - he thought that was like the greatest thing ever...Like, 'Oh! She's working hard!' She, you know, being loud means that you're, you're doing a BETTER job. You're really, you're really WORKING for that information or something. And I remember, I remember him, like repeatedly after that bringing up, like, 'Oh yeah! That was...She did a GREAT job! We could hear her yelling all the way outside!' And it was almost, almost putting pressure, like, 'Everyone ELSE should be doing

that, too.' You know, like, 'If you're NOT doing that then you're not TRYING hard enough.' That, it was almost that kind of an idea.

**James.** So do you, how does that, do you think that standard compares...I guess the, I guess the primary question I have is, do you feel that your commander's reaction was even MORE so BECAUSE she was a female.

**Jane.** Oh yeah. Absolutely. She was a YOUNG, small female.

**James.** It like they almost ENJOYED the contradiction?

**Jane.** Yeah. Yeah! And, uh, you know, but honestly if I were that detainee sitting there across from her, what's going to be going through MY mind at that point. Like, uh, I, I'm not really scared. You know? [laughter]

**James.** What you're saying on the flip side is that maybe that's the case, but for production, what do you get for that?

**Jane.** Not much. You're, you're getting some, uh, as far as the interrogator, a bit of a catharsis, or you get your emotions out there [chuckle] or whatever. But as far as gaining information off of that, it's not productive. In MY opinion. I don't know. I'm sure there are times when it's necessary or that it could be productive. Especially if you're working with a, a very young, you know, 15-, 18-year old Iraqi boy, that you could use something like that a little more effectively, almost like a stern mother approach or something. But for the most point I don't see any use in that.

The experiences of women interrogators indicate that they will interact with a significant number of MI soldiers, however, who are not 'native' to the field, but rather

served in a non-MI related field before reclassifying into a MI role. These ‘reclassified’ soldiers appear in the narratives of women interrogators as more consistently affected by role incongruence when evaluating and interacting with women interrogators. Natasha describes this dynamic in action:

**Natasha.** They just, um, they’d been working with women since, you know, the day they entered the military. It’s not strange for them. So no special treatment. Yeah.

**James.** All right. So a lot of the, um, sort of the getting, getting out doing the menial tasks, well there was none of that.

**Natasha.** Oh, no, no, of course there was none of that. And the NCOs who were responsible for me, and the one primarily who was formerly an infantry guy who had just transitioned over to BE a counterintel[ligence] agent, had just, I mean he was basically out of the schoolhouse.

**James.** So he DIDN’T come from that sort of legacy growing up with-

**Natasha.** No.

**James.** As a soldier. With girls.

**Natasha.** Exactly. So he didn’t buy any of that. He was cool with it because that’s what he knew how to do with a girl, too. Just keep them apart. Um, it was, it was kind of, but definitely, when interacting with the MI folks, or even going back to a more solidified area, you know anything that was, you know, brigade headquarters, division headquarters.

Interrogation may also be seen as taking place in a much wider variety of environments than static holding centers and detention facilities, which are often geographically separated from Army leaders. Much of Natasha's experience took place while she held a trusted position in which she was left to manage and control interrogation operations on her own terms. Because her training took place prior to the GWOT and did not anticipate that she would be deployed to Iraq, her experience involved a significant amount of discovery learning:

I tried the schoolhouse way for a while and ditched that really fast. I did one where I just kinda said, 'Okay, well, we gotta bunch of people here.' And I was like, 'I wanna talk to everyone. [Sigh] That's taking too long. Who here is a soldier?' And all these kinds raised their hands, and I said, 'Okay, you go over there.' And I said, 'Who here is a civilian?' And I'd be like, 'Hmmm, okay, you go sit over there.' And then I asked a guy who kinda looked he knew what he was talking about, I was like, 'Does anybody over there belong with you?' And he was like, 'No, those were just the people who got caught up. We were the ones.' And I was like, 'Okay, thanks.' And then I sent them off in a truck to a place, I'm not even sure, I said, 'Just go take them back to the rest of the unit.' And they're like, 'Okay.' And then I said to the guys, 'Good-bye. See ya. Have a nice day. Sorry about it.' [Laughter] Yes, that's odd control, but...

Women interrogators quickly learn that interpreters are active participants in interrogation operations. Beyond merely providing the service of translating between languages, interpreters' personal and professional qualities play important roles in an

interrogation. Harriett provides an example of how her interpreter intervened in an interrogation in order to curb a detainee's behavior toward her:

**Harriett.** [laughter] Well, I did have a...I think just the general, uh, uh, I did have the detaining who refused to look me in the eye, uh, and when I asked him why, uh, he said, 'It's because you're a woman and that's disrespectful.' Or, uh, and...

**James.** Was that accurate or what?

**Harriett.** No! And I had a very, I had like a 6-foot tall Shi'a interpreter with me originally from Baghdad where we were, and who always followed my lead but who at this point immediately jumped in and was like, 'That's bullshit and you know it's bullshit. Uh, that's not true!' Um, and stood up for me basically, um, and that was just, and it was the, the kid's way of resisting and evading.

In contrast to the idea that the interrogator-detainee relationship is inherently hostile, women interrogators can and do develop authentic attachments to detainees that exercise a profound effect on how women interrogators interpret their experiences. As Harriett goes on to explain:

I didn't have a lot of, I FEEL kind of this, this is going to sound really strange, I have this affinity for my detainees. Because nobody was ever disrespectful or crappy to me or just a kind of jerk in general. Um, I'm not saying they weren't a pain in the butt, or didn't resist, because that's a detainee's job, right? If I'm sitting in the, if the situation is reversed, I'm gonna do the same thing. Um, they really, really, always, they...I [Sigh] treated me with respect. I have a real affinity with the detainees I interrogated. [laughter] And it sounds really strange! It



sounds like the opposite of Stockholm Syndrome. I guess I never thought about that. It's impor- And I think it's important that other people understand that, um, it's not gonna be like a movie where you go in and sit down as a woman and all of the sudden the detainee starts saying, 'Oh I wanna do THIS or THAT to you!' Or 'Let me see your boobs!' [laughter] Or, because again that's another caricature that I think comes out. And I think it would be nice for people to know that it's actually really boring, and that doesn't usually happen. Um, and it's frustrating, and it's just your day. Um, you're being a woman is nine times out of ten inconsequential. Um, yeah. I never, I don't know why it didn't occur to me, but yeah, that doesn't happen in interrogations. I'm not saying that doesn't happen. It never happened to me, and I think it probably happens a lot less than people like to portray that happened.

The civilian friends and family of women interrogators frame how women interrogators export their identities into the larger world. Women interrogators find the gulf between their experiences and the experiences of the civilian members of their social circle is so wide that it precludes them from explaining what it means to be a woman interrogator. Despite unanimous satisfaction with being women interrogators, all participants expressed that it was simply easier to divert conversations with their friends and family toward other topics rather than to discuss their experiences. In Tommie's words:

You gotta learn to grow up quick, um, because you gotta be ready for everything, a life experience that is like no other woman that, you're, you're, no women in

your family are gonna understand what you've been through. None of your friends are gonna understand what you've been through, as far as outside of the military. You have to be prepared for a- I'm 27 and I feel like I'm 40 because I've done so much, you know what I mean. I've learned so much from being an interrogator and being in the military. I've learned a lot and I, you know, I could talk to my friends all day, but I don't talk to them about it because they don't understand. They never will.

#### **Superordinate Theme 4: The Perception of Women as Non-Threatening**

The fourth superordinate theme is the perception of women interrogators as non-threatening. This theme predominately addresses how detainees in the theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan during the GWOT generally viewed women interrogators. This dynamic primarily emerges from the cognitive dissonance detainees experience between their fear of being interrogated and their lack of fear in the presence of a woman. This dissonance provided a permissive environment for relationship building that men interrogators could not access merely on the basis of their gender identity. Because detainees were on the aggregate open to interacting with women interrogators from the outset, women interrogators quickly acquired a reputation for being potentially more effective than men interrogators. This unforeseen dynamic contradicted the Army's initial assumption about the effects of gender roles in Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian cultures on interrogation operations, and often caused units to view women interrogators as unique MI collection assets.

Harriett provides an explanation for how the representation of interrogation translated into a detainee's expectations:

**Harriett.** The presence of a woman is the last thing those detainees expected to see when they got out of the truck, when they were brought to the facility. Um, which automatically puts me at an advantage because they're slightly off kilter, right? Because interrogation is all about being in control, not just of the situation but of yourself. Um, and to kind of make the other person not in control of themselves. Or to alter their perception slightly. Um, and, you know, there's a lot of things we do to make that happen, but I mean, some of it is just by virtue of a guy getting out of a truck in the middle of the night knowing that he's going to, after hearing horror stories from Abu Ghraib and other anti-US propaganda about what we do to detainees and everything else. And pulling up and taking the bag off his head and it was ME! Or [laughter] or my counterpart who's like 120 pounds soaking wet.

**James.** Who's also female.

**Harriett.** Who's also female. So just that alone was a force multiplier. Um, I think we met less resistance than we would have if we were men. I, I do, looking back now I believe we met less resistance because we were women... When you get into a war, the stories that people are going to tell their soldiers about what will happen to them if they get captured by the enemy. Those stories are always going to be terrifying. They're always going to be used as propaganda because that's how you keep people in line. And so that element of surprise is ALWAYS

going to be there. Because what sounds scarier to you, like, ‘They’re going to whip you on the bottom of your feet with a cable,’ and, ‘You’re going to get there and there’ll be a GIRL waiting for ya’? [laughter] And that’s never going to be part of a propaganda, ever.

Chloe feels the difference comes from how women in Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian cultures tend to occupy a position of lower authority to men, which conflicts with the perception of an interrogator’s supposed authority and control over a detainee.

I think it’s because, because of how they view women in their country? They’re not, they’re not in control of anything. They, I mean they do see women as somebody, I mean they do care about their women but they’re somebody who’s lower than who they are. And I think with that they do, they do see us more comfortably. But at the same time they’re nervous because we ARE foreigners, and we ARE interrogators. So they don’t know what to expect. But I think it does increase their comfort level.

For Salt, detainees’ reactions to women interrogators were informed by a cultural contradiction in more general terms regarding the activities in which a woman is expected to engage versus a woman interrogator’s occupation of a military role:

Does the detainee even come remotely close to telling you that you have to go to the kitchen and make him a sandwich? Or why are you...? No! [Laughter] No they are not! You know the whole, ‘Well you left your family. You’re supposed to be a mother. You’re supposed to have stayed home and had your babies. What

are you doing here? How dare you work?’ I’ve not encountered that, at all, in any of my entire time there. Um, I’ve had a few detainees go as far as really prying as to why I wasn’t married, yet. And then it was you’re 19, why are you not married, yet? You should be having...I mean they were almost telling me what I SHOULD be doing with my life, but not in an offensive manner. Like, ‘Madam, why, why are you not married? You’re so young! You’re beautiful! You’ve gotta go do this...’ ‘Well, I’m, don’t FEEL like it.’ And they, THAT’s when they get a little more...confused if anything, you know. That culture just doesn’t understand why you’re, why you WANT to wait to have kids, or why you wanna wait to get married. ‘What do you mean?!’ I think they see a young woman as, like, prime baby breeding material, [chuckle] and you have to jump right on that. Um, yeah.

Shannon more explicitly articulates from where women interrogators believe detainees’ perceptions of women come:

Yeah, I think that, yeah, um, being a female is, yeah, they don’t see you as obviously a physical threat regardless of what you believe as far as whether they’re going to be, uh, you know, hurt or not in our custody. So they don’t see us as a physical threat. And just in general regardless of where you’re from, females have the, that, um, stereotype – I don’t know if that’s EXACTLY the right word – of being kind and nurturing. Your mom, your grandma, you know. So, yeah, definitely being able to use, that’s definitely something that you can use.

Chloe goes on to describe how this dynamic facilitated rapport building as a precursor to intelligence collection:

**Chloe.** I think every male views women as this somebody who can be warm-hearted, and who can, they think about, they think about their mother, or their sister. I can relate to that type of role, to where I interrogated, if I was nice to them, uh, you know, you know, do the NICE interrogator that is there to HELP them, they opened up. Not necessarily that they cooperated, you know, and gave INFORMATION, but it seems like they opened up more with female interrogators rather than through male interrogators.

**James.** Well, why, um, do you, why do you think that is? I mean I-

**Chloe.** Let, let, let me say that they view a woman as, as that role. So they don't see us as a threat, as threatening as compared to MALE interrogators. And, and it could be just, you know, um, male...I don't know. I don't know how other male interrogators started, but just by looking at a male who's a foreigner and they know they're interrogators, and I think they have this thought. But when it's a female, they calm down a little bit. They, their, their wall is not so high up any more. They think, they think, um they feel more at ease with FEMALE interrogators. I think that's what it is, that's what that was.

Finally, Natasha describes how this dynamic meant that as a woman her gender became an asset to her colleague in order to collect intelligence information:

I was, you know, somehow the woman who, I could see the change in how they talked to some people, but this was one where he [her interrogator colleague] just turned it over. And because I had been a soft and gentle-spoken girl, you know, I was with a guy who was just, you know, weak as all get out. And I'm sure he was

softer than I was, but it was, it was the girl thing. And he [the detainee] just told me anything he could think of. And he knew nothing worthwhile. But, you know, anything he could think of. He just sort of started vomiting information...They didn't want to talk to an interrogator. I'm just a girl. I couldn't BE a real interrogator, right? I'm just a girl. And so their view of what someone in that role could be- and they would tell me. They'd be like, 'Oh! Oh! You're just a soldier. You're a nice girl, right?' 'Okay, yeah, I am.' I don't care what they THINK I am. It doesn't matter.

### **Superordinate Theme 5: Demonstrating Technical Prowess**

The fifth superordinate theme explored in this research is how women interrogators developed and demonstrated their technical prowess as a way of overcoming prejudices against them as woman and as interrogators. This theme involves more than simply women acting more like men in order to appear more consistent with the stereotype of the masculine soldier, although some participants did adopt that strategy. Instead, this theme refers to the variety of ways in which women interrogators consciously developed skills and fostered characteristics to prove to others that women interrogators were desirable, indeed essential, members of the military force.

Some women interrogators felt it was important to show men soldiers, particularly those in the combat arms, that women interrogators were legitimate soldiers and military professionals. Shannon explains how and why this was her approach strategy when attending a military leadership course:

**Shannon.** I went to Fort C-, which is combat arms primarily. And in my platoon, team, really my entire class, um, you had people that were coming from Fort F- - my unit- and then there were people coming from Fort S-, and then I think some aviation people. And then EVERYBODY ELSE that was there was from Fort C-. And we had Rangers, and we had the engineers, and we had the infantry guys, and we had, like, you know, all these people that were combat arms and didn't work with women. And I definitely, um, was judged. [laughter] We ALL- EVERY female that was there was definitely judged to be inferior [chuckle] simply because we have vaginas. [laughter]

**James.** [Laughter] So how did you deal with that?

**Shannon.** I just did what I do. [laughter] Um, I, and, and, the surprisingly, or maybe NOT surprisingly, surprisingly one of the ways that you get these guys' respect was PT [Physical Training]. And I could RUN, you know.

**James.** But you run marathons now.

**Shannon.** Yeah, I run marathons now. Um, but yeah, I could run, and, you know, they were like, 'Oh...okay.'

**James.** 'We didn't have to carry her!' [laughter]

**Shannon.** [Laughter] And that, and I think that kind of got their attention. And, you know, they were like, 'Well, maybe we weren't completely right blowing this person off.' So it, it opened them up to, you know, see other aspects of my ability to not suck. Um, but yeah, the very end of the very last day we had to go around and everybody had to say something about somebody else, and a lot of these, a



LOT of them, of the guys were like, 'I, I didn't like you when I first met you,' you know, 'blah, blah, blah,' 'I've never worked with women before...dah, dah, dah, but,' you know, 'I'd,' you know, 'I'd go into combat with you.' So...

Several participants explained how women are socialized to believe that certain behaviors are more acceptable for them as women than for men. As Tammy explains, many facets of that socialization tend to favor women's ability to serve as interrogators by virtue of the importance of interpersonal relationships in the field:

I, I don't know, but just that's the way we're raised. Like I said, we're very, and I can't say for every female, but I just know like me growing up you're kinda taught...[sigh] to be more empathetic, caring, sensitive to what other people think. I think females are often brought up...[sigh] you're very attuned to like, you know, your parents. A lot of, uh – what's the word? – superficial things, you take a lot of...the way people view you is...[sigh] I don't how to, I don't know if I can...[sigh] the way people view you is very instilled into females. Like you have to LOOK a certain way, you have to ACT to certain way, you have to be a good MOM, you have to have a full time job, you have to...There are so many demands I think that females have to be perceptive of some many different things, and juggling so many different things at once, that you just get used to noticing, and...I don't know if I, I don't know if I know how to describe it exactly right. I mean, in just in social interactions, you're, you're used to being sensitive about things, and you're used to noticing things, and I...I don't know how to describe it. [chuckle] Sorry! [chuckle]

Harriett echoes Tammy's assessment, and ties women's socialization to the development of skills that facilitate women interrogators' manipulation of men in particular:

[I]t wasn't until probably a year ago someone found out that I'd been an interrogator and asked, 'Oh my gosh, is it different because you're a woman?' Of course, they wanted to know about just being in the Army in general from being a woman. And I said, I said a lot of, in n my experience women tend to excel in, in, in the field of interrogation. Women tend to be pretty good interrogators. And they said, 'Why do you think so?' And I started to give the, like, the reason, just like, women mature faster, they're more patient, we have more empathy, blah, blah, blah. But then it occurred to me, um, as a woman, from the time you're born, even if you lived in the, even if you're born into the most progressive family ever, you still have to live in the rest of the world. And even as a woman in the Western culture in America, um, you learn from the time you're small that if there's something you want, or something you want done or want to happen, the easiest and quickest way to make that happen is to find a way to make to it seem like it was a man's idea.

She goes on to discuss how her adoption of what she interprets as masculine personality traits aided her in demonstrating to men soldiers that she had the interpersonal skills to manage gender relations with men soldiers:

[A] large part of it has to do with my personality. And then watching the performance of the, EVEN at that level of performance, and a lot of the, what they

like was that I was the, I guess you'd say mouthy? Like it wouldn't be uncommon for me to tell a group of men, you, ya know, you guys are all kind of acting like ridiculous dick heads right now. [laugh] Like this line of thinking you've got going is stupid. And I think that candor is appreciated, too...I have a mouth like a sailor. I'm not, ya know, averse to off color humor, or things like that. Um, it's like 'one-of-the-guys' kind of thing. Which IS my personality largely. I'm not a very, I'm not an especially girly girl. Um, and I typically have always hung out with men. Um, but that part of me, that aspect of my personality, um, in the Army was also performance because that's what, that's why commanders liked me. That's, you know what I mean? Um, look at, look at that tiny girl who acts like a dude, ya know? Um, so that was part of it...

For Tommie, crying was often a part of her stress coping mechanism, but she feels very strongly that the preservation of her reputation as a woman interrogator depended on her ability to hide her crying from others:

I did, I did a lot of crying in country. And I don't know if that's a male AND female thing, but for me, I don't know if it's because of my, my back- I'm a Puerto Rican and we're an emotional people, but I did. I would wait. I would go to my room [laughter] and that's where I would do it. I would NEVER, you know what I mean? Maybe once or twice my [Platoon Leader] has seen me very upset and, um, that, that was just military stuff, you know what I mean. And nothing, nothing that has to do with being an interrogator. Just being in the military. But I

made sure that they [her soldiers] understood, ‘You, you have a job, this is what you signed up for.’

Not every participant reflected discomfort with how she was treated by her men colleagues and leaders due to their preconceived ideas about how being a woman meant being less of a soldier. Natasha, for example, found that she could manipulate those prejudices in order to free up her time to focus on performing her duties:

I loved it. Um, because it allowed me to, nobody ever held me back in my job. I got to, you know, I was going out with the commander on trips and I never got kept FROM doing anything. But I didn’t have to drive the vehicle and I didn’t have to fill up the fuel and I didn’t have to carry the bags. I got, you know, the menial duties got left behind. And you can say, ‘Oh well that’s because you, maybe it’s because of the position that you played.’ And that could be it, but it wasn’t. It wasn’t done in a you’re-so-important-we-have-to-take-care-of-you. It was, ‘We have to take care of little Natasha’.

Additionally, Natasha learned to move between her position as a woman and as a soldier in order to strengthen her familiarity with her operational environment and to build relationships with a broader section of Iraqi society than she could have had she been only a woman or only a soldier:

Even when we had an interpreter, it was still, you know, Egyptians. They were outsiders in a place. Not that I was, you know, totally fluent [in Arabic], but I was known and oftentimes [during key leader engagements], so I would like, ‘I’m gonna go hang out with them [Iraqi women] this time.’ And they would go,

‘Great.’ And they’d carry on and I’d come back out and go, ‘Okay, I’m done. I’m back.’ And I was welcomed in as if I had never been anywhere. A very strangely fluid situation. I know I had some very unique situations because of the flexibility I had in that ability to move back and forth...I figured out how they know how we are, but it also meant that I could participate in the man things because I was capable. And we’d start traveling around the area and just meeting people first before the, before the infantry went in because we wouldn’t want to hurt them. You send the girl first. I make friends or I tell them that’s a bad place and then they make a plan for how to go after it...And I was able to move oftentimes in MANY of these situations I was actually in the lead, whether or not I was senior person or anything because I had the relationships.

The ability to speak the language of the local population constitutes a common idea within the theme of demonstrating technical prowess. Harriett learned Arabic at the Defense Language Institute before deploying to Iraq where she quickly adapted the dialect she had learned in training to the local dialect of Baghdad. In one situation during a raid, she was tasked with questioning an Iraqi woman. The combat unit was unaware of Harriett’s linguistic skills and so provided one of their own interpreters to assist her on site. Harriett soon found the need to circumvent the interpreter’s influence on her questioning:

**Harriett.** Keep in mind this unit’s looking for a guy who shot one of their own in the head point blank. And, um, this interpreter works for them as a local national. He’s not cleared...

**James.** He doesn't have a security clearance.

**Harriett.** He doesn't have a security clearance, he's not vetted, he also doesn't know I speak Arabic. And so at FIRST he wants to help me talk to the woman. At FIRST I think that's maybe not a bad idea because it's a little unsettling to have 25 of us show up to your house in the middle of the night. And I start asking her questions and he isn't saying ANYTHING that I'm saying. And so I make him-

**James.** In terms of the interpretation, like he's not being faithful?

**Harriett.** Yeah. And so I make him go away. And he says, and I said, 'That's not what I asked,' or 'You need to go somewhere else.' And he said, 'Well then how are you gonna talk to her?' And in Arabic I told him, 'I think I'll do all right.' Um, so I had to get rid of him.

### **Superordinate Theme 6: Harnessing the System**

Theme 3 demonstrates how the participants describe the experience of being a woman interrogator in terms of the complex interactions between various influences on their relationship with others and with themselves. The sixth superordinate theme is how women came to harness that system in order to shape their experiences. When a woman interrogator identifies a barrier to performing her duties, she could use her relationship skills to change how others behaved toward her and to acquire new resources. As Natasha states, "Being a normal human being and a nice person was the most of what I did." This influence is calculated to increase a woman interrogator's ability and the ability of the interrogators for whom they were responsible to perform her duty as an interrogator. In order to exercise this agency, a woman interrogator had to understand the interactions

present in the systems where she operated, and harness those dynamics to achieve desired effects.

The most obvious example of this theme is how a woman interrogator interacts with detainees who resist answering her questions with truthfulness and accuracy. As Shannon explains:

**Shannon.** THEY'RE the ones that- well, I need something, too. I want information. But, you know, what THEY needed was probably a, you know, very, very important to them to the point they're, commit to that path. They feel they have to continue to that path of, you know, they feel, We're all awesome, and friends, and you're just like my family.' So, it would get to the point where if we got into somewhere they didn't want to talk about, then I could revert back to that, and, you know, push on that whole, 'But we're so close now.' You know, 'You said so yourself.'

**James.** Do you think that would be different if- had you been a male interrogator?

**Shannon.** I- Um, I, yeah, because I think- I'm not saying that a male couldn't interrogate, get to that point, but they would have to do a lot of the work to get there. When in that, in my situation a lot of times the detainee had already laid the groundwork in their attempts to manipulate me.

During the GWOT, women soldiers were ostensibly banned from combat operations – though this ban meant less in practice than in rhetoric. Women interrogators, however, often find it essential to take part in combat operations not only due to the contingencies of a mission but also in order to acquire a first-hand understanding of the

operational environment from which detainees come. To achieve this goal, many participants describe volunteering to participate in raids, patrols, and other combat missions, even though officially they should not have been allowed to do so. As Harriett describes, when asked if she was ever assigned to patrols in Iraq:

**Harriett.** Very rarely. Once or twice, um, I would try and weasel my way into it. There were some other combat units and I knew commanders in those units and people, and I would occasionally try to weasel my way, um, and I would also try and do it for my soldiers, because at least ONE other interrogator who was there, they had stuck her there from the beginning of the deployment. Um, and she's a fantastic interrogator and a brilliant, brilliant woman, but the SEEING where you are, and the just BEING in the place.

**James.** It's hard to have CONTEXT where you're in the facility.

**Harriett.** Yes, that's actually, yes, exactly.

**James.** It's like you're talking about a myth.

**Harriett.** Yeah, and that was one of my points of order was to try and, um, find some, find a way for her to go on some missions, even just a presence patrol to sort of contextualize this situation. Cause when I came in, if a guy sits down and tells me, 'Oh well you turn right on this street, you know, next to the, you know, the, uh, traffic circle with the picture of...'

**James.** So if you're doing map tracking?

**Harriett.** Yeah, you know, it's the traffic circle with the picture of the Ayatollah Sistani. Well there are 15,000 of those in Baghdad. But I could say, 'You mean



the one by Happy Time Bakery? Or you mean the one by the big pile of trash that's always burning?' Because I had that so it would save me time. Um, and so, yeah, that was a big thing for her to go out and, and do that.

The role of interpreters as active players in interrogations has already been described, but as interrogators are responsible for managing the interrogation, women interrogators have to ensure coordination and, at times, take corrective action in their relationship with their interpreters. Jane describes a difficult experience with an interpreter who Jane had earlier explained did not believe that a woman interrogator could perform interrogations effectively. That dynamic required Jane to intervene in the interpreter's performance:

I wouldn't do this IN the booth because that's just kind of, I don't know, I feel like that would detract from BOTH of our credibility. But, uh, afterwards I'd sit her down, and I'd have to, you know, it only...after I talked to her, you know. It probably happened a couple times before I had to pull her aside and be like, 'Okay, HERE's the thing, you know. I didn't, I didn't say that. And, uh, that's NOT what I'm trying to do here. I'm trying to do THIS instead. So just, please, just say what \*I\* say. And don't go off on your own.' And I'll be honest, I just ended up not using her anymore and switching to a different interpreter.

An additional aspect of women interrogators' use of the social system around them involves their use of colleagues to refine and improve proficiency as an interrogator. Just as the quality of being a woman became identified as a skill that other interrogators could call upon to facilitate their interrogation, women interrogators identify

the value in the experiences of other interrogators. They then call upon their social networks to evaluate and expand their own skills. Over time, women interrogators become themselves a source of authority and knowledge independent of the quality of being a woman, so that others call upon them to assist in their own interrogations. As Tammy explains:

But also doing the job and being successful, it's not even just being a female, just sometimes, you know, bouncing off ideas off of everyone, or other interrogators in general. But I think a lot of that has to do with, like with me you're, you're talking to your colleagues, you're talking to your peers trying to get ideas. And you know, I might talk to YOU and say, you know, you just went and talked to this detainee, and, 'How did it go? And what did you do? How were you successful?' I might listen to you and you might do something that, you know, I'm, I think, you know, I might want to try that. And I try that but, you know, other, you know, talking to some other interrogators I might think, I don't think that's a good idea. I don't want to take that advice. I might listen to them, but I know for me personally that's not going to work. So I think, just, you know, doing like at that JDIC, being there as long as I was, doing as many interrogations as I did, people start coming to talk to you because they know that you've done the job, that you've been successful. You know, not ALWAYS, but female or not they're still going to seek you out to see what things you're doing to be successful, what things HASN'T worked for you.

At times, a woman interrogator may find that her being a woman does constitute an authentic barrier to building or managing rapport with a detainee. In that case, Harriett stresses the importance of a woman interrogator's professional relationship with her colleagues who are men, but acknowledges that a woman interrogator's pride can damage her ability to know when it is time to hand a detainee over to a man interrogator:

Don't take it personally. Just move on. And you have to accept the fact that you may get someone who's such a disgusting pervert that you're gonna have to hand it off to a man because your presence is too distracting for this guy. If someone's like, I don't know, like sexually immature or emotionally immature that they're just like, 'Uh girls,' or 'Boobs!', ya know, um, and that has nothing to do with a woman as an interrogator. It has to do with that detainee being socially retarded. [laughter] Um, and I think that's something female interrogators need to realize, is that if there's a situation where their presence as a woman is distracting it has nothing to do with their ability as an interrogator. It's nothing, it's not a short coming on their part as an interrogator. It's, uh, it's an emotional or, um, social issue in the detainee. Um, and so don't try and make a case out of it. Don't storm in like you're hell and ready. You're not - [laughter] -your purpose is not to train this guy out to be, you know, a progressive [laughter] free-thinking man who stops all the sudden viewing women as objects. Your job is to get information, and if you can't do it someone else has to do it. You have to let go.

For woman interrogators, the disparity between the mythology of interrogation and the real world is best dealt with through mentorship. But the inability to find mentors

early in their careers is a consistent pattern in woman interrogators' experiences. Over time and with experience, however, woman interrogators themselves become the mentors they lacked. As Jane describes:

And uh, and so, \*I\* kind of pushed, uh, a lot of the training- we didn't do a lot of training for one thing, and that's sad in and of itself. But a lot of our training was very, uh, either it dealt a lot with source [operations], or the interrogation side was an infantry soldier that we had to talk to, and was like, 'Well this is what my SHEET says. Do you wanna read it?' [chuckle] 'Oh, okay!' But trying to actually sit down with the soldiers and have a conversation with them, especially the female interrogators that were going over...I would talk to them and be like, 'Look, this isn't, this is NOT the way it really is in real life. THIS is what you can expect.' And so I think HOPEFULLY they had a little bit more REALISTIC expectation...Yeah...as far as having interrogation training, we didn't get much of it. So it was more like when we were sitting around waiting for something to happen, discussing, because we had some newer soldiers who didn't know what to expect, and so to talk to them. Or when we went out to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, I took the lead there in charge of the interrogation side of it. And so, you know, I kind of, uh, getting them ready...you know, telling them what to expect. [And] it was all males on the team there with us.

### **Superordinate Theme 7: Reflection and the Development of Self-Awareness**

The seventh and final superordinate theme is reflection as a tool for developing self-awareness about one's experience. All participants acknowledged the seriousness of

combat and shared a belief in the critical role interrogation plays in intelligence operations. Thanks to the perceived contradiction between being a woman and an interrogator, women interrogators translate their professional self-evaluation into an evaluation of their self-worth. The quality of that self-worth strongly relates to women interrogators' thinking critically about their failures, managing self-doubt, and reconciling the expectations for being a woman interrogator with the reality.

Women interrogators frequently employ humor as a means of managing stress during interrogation operations. Finding humor in situations that occur during interrogation operations serves as both a coping mechanism for analyzing one's mistakes and a means of maintaining morale. As Tommie explains:

Even, I mean, after every interrogation you always have to have a laugh. I mean like we had a tracking board. Like, 'How many times did your detainee say, 'Wallah, ma 'arif' ['I swear I don't know']?' You know what I mean? [laughter] So, um, everything was entertaining to me. I mean, in all kinds of emotions, you know. But those were, I would say that the crying ones were funny because that's the first thing they went down to, and 'No! La [No]! La [No]! La [No]!' [chuckle] And I'm like, 'I haven't even asked you the question, yet!' [laughter] But, uh, it is entertaining. It's, it's what keeps you in high spirits. I mean you gotta find a way to laugh when you're in such a horrible place.

Tommie goes on to describe, however, an incident in which she found no humor. After a great deal of effort, she determined a detainee was not of intelligence value and recommended his release. The warrant officer in charge of her was initially incredulous

of her assessment, but after extensive discussions he ultimately decided to place his faith in her ability and the detainee was subsequently released. A couple of months later, her command received confirmation that after his release Tommie's former detainee executed a series of catastrophic bombings in another area of operations:

[T]hat was the first and only time that ever happened to me and it has stuck in my head. And that's why I say I think about is there ANYTHING that I missed. What did, what could I have done? You know what I mean? And it sucks to say that, and I've even told my students that, I, I tell them that story because I want them to realize that it's real. You're not [sigh] it's not just affecting you. It's affecting EVERYONE, because it, it happened in a whole other area of operations, you know. And, uh, that's why I say I know I'm not perfect and NO interrogator, regardless if you're male or female is perfect, and you're NOT always gonna get all the information, but just be as persistent as you could be. Um, I guess, I don't know. There, there's some things that I just, I wish I could take back, but you can't. You just kind of have to move on and say, 'All right. Now I know for next time.' You know? So...

Tommie's story demonstrates how a woman interrogator comes to terms with what it means to be a woman interrogator by reflecting on the difficulties of that lived experience. Tammy advances this narrative to explain how reflection leads to self-awareness about what being a woman means in the context of failure:

I'm not gonna lie. [chuckle] It felt, sometimes it felt very bad. You feel like, you know, personally like there has to be something else I could've done. What else?

You know, I must have, there could've been something else I could've said, something else I could've tried to do...I mean it, it bothered me, but in the same respect with some of these individuals they were just very difficult even with male interrogators. Yeah, typically the male interrogators that would talk to the people that I had real problems with would get farther than I would. But they weren't, even THEY had difficulties with them. So I mean that made me – not like I want anyone to have difficult times but [laughter] – it made me feel better, you know, [chuckle] that maybe you know it's not all just because I'm a horrible interrogator. But it's, it's hard to deal with. Especially sometimes just because you feel like it's because, just because I'm a female. It's kind of, there's nothing I can do about that. I can't change that fact, you know? And it's held against you...what can you do?

All participants expressed how an interrogator's perceived likelihood of success was tied to the paradigm that interrogation requires aggressive approach strategies and outward demonstrations of hostility toward detainees. As Salt explains:

I took some time, some getting used to. I felt like I had to overcompensate a lot in the beginning, you know. 'Oh that's it. I'm using the Fear Up Harsh all the time because I'm just gonna yell at you because I'm not a dude and that's the best I can do.' But then I realized I look like a chipmunk. [Laughter] An angry barking squirrel, was what it was. [Laughter] It, it was a big balancing act, you know. At the end I think you could use your gender to such an advantage when you maintain a certain level of poise and tact that a man might not necessarily possess.

Or when you speak a little more passionately, or when you speak a little more timidly, or when you speak a little more convincingly, then a man would, you know.

Questioning the pervasiveness of this representation requires as much confidence and self-esteem as it does technical understanding of the field. Take, for example, Jane's assessment of another women interrogator to whom she and her team were introduced in order to prepare them for real world operations:

**Jane.** We had one girl at that point who had, uh, who had been at B--- F---. And she, honestly, I talked to someone after our deployment who knew her, [chuckle] and she had only been there for like a month. And she had never done an interrogation by herself. A month or two. But she was, she was a Korean woman. Again, just very aggressive. SHE was actually in charge of the interrogation team when they first got to L---. And she was just so over the top. She was a lot like that, uh, that female interpreter that I had. You know, the detainee would be sitting there ready to say something and she'd just, uh, yell at them. You know? [chuckle] It's like, 'You weren't even giving this detainee a chance to speak to you?' She would just, I don't know. I remember her having a, a tennis ball, and throwing it at the wall next to the detainee, and things like that, er, uh. And this was actual REAL LIFE when we were in the booth and she was supposed to be showing US how to do the, how to do interrogation.

**James.** And so this was the first time you were looking at a real interrogation and it was a female interrogator-



**JA.** This is was first REAL interrogation I had seen. Yeah. And she was so AGGRESSIVE and like-

**JDL.** And I take it you feel that wasn't a productive-

**JA.** The detainee couldn't even SAY anything if he wanted to. If he wanted to answer a question, she'd be like, 'I DON'T EVEN WANNA HEAR YOUR VOICE! I DON'T WANT YOU TO TALK!' [chuckle] You know! [laughter] What are you gonna get out of that?! It was very strange, uh, but SHE was the one with the experience. SHE knew what was, you know, she knew the RIGHT way to do this things, and so. [chuckle] Even before we deployed, uh...I remember one of the male interrogators he went in, and he was new, too, but he did a good job. Like he had logical arguments. The things he was saying made sense. And she was like, 'You're not yelling enough! You're not getting in his face!' You know? And she was telling HIM he was doing things wrong because he wasn't being loud and obnoxious like her and so...yeah I used the word 'obnoxious'! [chuckle] I don't know. She didn't...she wasn't very, I don't know. After about a month and a half they took her out of the interrogation facility and so that's when MY team came in. I'm, I think there were other factors leading to it, but...yeah. It's never one...

Almost all the participants expressed how becoming a successful interrogator as a women meant finding a way of being an interrogator that was unique to her. When asked what advice she would give to a new woman interrogator, Chloe said, "I would tell them to, um, find their comfort zone and their interrogation specific style so that they can do,

um, better, or know what to say, know how to do certain things in certain ways.” Women interrogators’ strongest advantage often came from not occupying a position in relation to detainees that required aggressive approaches. Jane describes how realizing that expectations for men and for interrogators did not necessarily apply to her led to self-analysis of her own strengths and abilities in the context of her being a woman interrogator:

I would look at it like, are you kidding me? He sees a woman sitting across from him. This isn’t going to scare him. Why would I even TRY to use some type of harsh approach? It’s, it’s, I don’t know. First of all, it’s not ME. BUT maybe it’s not me because, maybe if I were a big, you know, 6-and-a-half-foot tall man, I would, I would feel like I would want to use those approaches. But being a female, I never, never really gravitated toward them.

The participants explained that over time a woman interrogator has to recognize what it means to be a woman in each context and then harness that meaning to define one’s experience. This process often coincides with women interrogators’ first experiences in field settings. For Chloe, learning to become an interrogator initially felt in competition with how she was perceived by others:

I mean I didn’t have that much difficulty. Of course because I was just starting I was, I was learning at the same time of my, my style of interrogation. But there were, a few times I felt, um, there were other people around but not, um, they didn’t really trust my ability to interrogate.

Natasha discusses how women interrogators are often left to their own devices not only to arrive at these conclusions, but to translate them into successful approach strategies for performing their duties as an interrogator:

[Being a woman interrogator] was always the THING, right? It was always different and, and strange. At least that's the way I saw it. And so I can certainly see how from a male point of view it's easy to separate the others. From us, we don't see it that different. Us being, you know, those of us who identify as women, it doesn't seem that weird because we're just who we are so there's a lot of connections and disconnections...So it was a long time, and I'd basically found my way by then. And I'd say generally I found my way independently. There was very little assists of a personal nature. You know the, the people that I worked with became familial in a sort of way but not really any help in this.

While women interrogators learned to develop emotional connections in their relationship building with detainees, these skills took time to develop. As their effectiveness proved itself, women interrogators acquired more information from their detainees, some of which included graphic violence and violence toward women. In these situations, women interrogators struggled to maintain their professional distance, even though the revelation of this information indicated they were performing effectively in the interrogation. As Tommie relates:

**Tommie.** The younger people are, they regret doing it. You can tell they regret everything that they've done. Why they did it. You know what I mean. Um, and

some you could tell that they just had no choice. So as an interrogator it's like, well, I understand that.

**James.** You mean that they've been coerced or put in a difficult position because of-

**Tommie.** Yeah. They have no choice. That's their life, you know what I mean? They either do it or they, their family's gone or whatever the case is. You could just tell, you know what I mean. But with older, um, I would say like the 40s, 30- to 40-year old men, even their, um, security forces when we would have them come in it was like they just, they just didn't care. It didn't matter what approach they gave them. It didn't matter what you, how you tried to speak to them. They had accepted what they'd done and they did it because they, you are the infidel. You are the one that's in their country. And we're gonna get you out. And it, I think for me that was one of those, that was, the first time that happened to me it was like, these people are fucking crazy! You know what I mean? I'm sorry, I don't mean to curse.

**James.** No, actually, it doesn't matter. There's nothing wrong with that.

**Tommie.** After the first time I realized, these people are crazy. They're, they have a lot of hate and they're, they have a lot of pain, you know what I mean? For a 40-year old man to just be like, 'Yep, I killed these people, and I did it in front of my son so he can realize that...' You know what I mean? That right there was just like, okay, you're, something's wrong with you!

Tammy goes on to discuss the restraint required when specifically hearing about the mistreatment of women, something which Tammy believes cultural training could have better prepared her to handle:

The culture classes were not nearly, they taught you know the basics, like don't show the sole of your shoe to the detainee, but as far as preparing you, you know, like with the tribal stuff, the intermingling with that, and really understanding, you know, I, for females the way they treat females, like I have to admit there were some interrogations that I would talk to guys and, you know, we would talk about their family, which they were fine with talking about females, but I would have to listen to the things that they would say about how they would TREAT their wives, their daughters, and me, myself was just APPALLED, absolutely APPALLED. But I would listen and, 'Oh! Ok' you know, to build rapport. But I would listen to it and just, 'Oh! And when you wanted to have sex with her it doesn't matter if she wanted to you or not, you just...oh, okay, I see.' Listening to that kind of stuff you just kinda had to hold back a lot...

Salt discusses the struggle women interrogators feel coming to grips finding their own path through a field that, in many respects, is still evolving to accommodate the presence of women:

The best way to make it work and how to work with it and deal with it is to never lose sight of the person you chose to be as an interrogator, as a female soldier, as anybody else that you came in with. And, and there's gonna be a lot of mental warfare with that. And I think honestly it's not gonna always be just military. You

know, I'm sure, I never had the whole college experience in terms of going to college, but I'm pretty certain it's always gonna be, there will always be some kind of gender separate here, you know, labeling, or stereotyping someone, so on and so forth. I, I don't know, I just, I took away a good lesson from the military. I didn't like it at the time but looking back at it now I loved the, like, who I turned into afterwards. But...[long pause] just seeing how it how affected other female soldiers and how some people have not dealt with it, or dealt with it in areas that ultimately had them, you know, get hurt emotionally, or incapable of dealing with a certain issue, or incapable of the pressures that come with the severity of your job and the seriousness of your job, I mean it really at the end of the day when you look at the job field itself, if you don't do it right people are gonna die. And that's a lot of burden to carry and you have to be prepared for that, and make that your priority, not your gender, you know, categorizing you for how well you can do it. No. You're gonna do it, and you're gonna do it the way you're supposed to do it. And you're gonna do it to the standard you were trained to do it. And you're gonna save lives. THAT'S the mentality you need to go in with it on.

When asked if she would encourage her own daughters to consider becoming a military interrogator, Salt responded:

I would encourage both of them actually. I think I'm applying a lot of the social skills I've gained from becoming an interrogator and learning to talk to different groups of people. It REALLY becomes a valuable tool in life in general, you know, from the simplest bank trip to buying a car or something that silly. But in

terms of accomplishment, I, I would encourage it. I don't know if I can envision both my girls WANTING to do something like this, you know... Yeah, but that would require them to join the military and when you look at the big picture, it's not just MI. I mean, being a FEMALE in the military it's, it really does have a lot of downsides to it, you know. You, you get labeled immediately, you get treated a certain way. You're constantly a piece of meat for somebody. And you get a bad name in general just from serving in the military. You're never really looked at as a soldier at the end of the day. Looking back at my entire military career, I, like the situation I'm in now is probably the best of both worlds... So at the end of the day, I know who I am as a person, not what I'm being label or being judged as.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Inequality constitutes this research's cause of action. Sadistic torture and sexual deviance have hitherto been the reference points for women interrogators' representation. In one sense, the enterprise of war itself claims to justify this slander. Our society genders war and combat as masculine, assigning to it the traits of aggression, violence, and anger that we have cordoned off from the feminine construct. The authority of that barrier emerges from our very narratives of combat experience:

Because women are *exterior* to war, men *interior*, men have long been the great war-story tellers, legitimated in that role because they have 'been there' or because they have greater *entrée* into what it 'must be like'...Part of the female *absence* has to do with how war gets defined (where *is* the front?) and with who is authorized to *narrate*. (Elshtain, 1987, pp. 212-3)

Control of the war narrative, therefore, restricts our discourse to only a few options for articulating women's participation in war in contradiction to their apparent nature. And on this point we should be clear regarding women interrogators in the Army during the GWOT: They are soldiers engaged in a military mission to defeat a designated enemy through combat on foreign soil. Detainees, regardless of the accuracy or immediacy of their perceived threat, enter every interrogation compelled by physical control exercised upon them. That control is "personal, visible, manifest, and non-structural" (Jeong, 2000, p. 20). In this sense, women interrogators are undeniably participants in the violence of combat, an election they made even though choices to the contrary existed. The findings of this research substantiate that position.



The fields of feminist studies in general and feminist security studies in particular, though earnest in their endeavors, often falter in their representations of women combatants in no small part thanks to feminism's traditional abhorrence of violence. The result has relegated our most generous discourse to tropes that delegitimize the agency of women interrogators, tainting the success of feminist inquiry into the choices people – and especially women – make. These “narratives imply that when women choose, they choose within a specific spectrum of socially acceptable choices. When women behave outside of the realm of those choices, they have not chosen to do so” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007, p. 190). Furthermore, such reductionism reifies a model of what it means to be a woman that renders as much injustice to women interrogators' identities as women as Elshtain's 'beautiful soul' narrative (1982) does to women interrogators' identities as soldiers. The stories of women interrogators, however, prove that they have 'been there' and know what it 'must be like'. Their experiences create an opening in feminist discourse for “nonpeaceful identities to inspire war on aspects of the humanist establishment which may deny women power” (Sylvester, 1987, p. 497). This research, therefore, joins a growing voice in feminist security studies addressing the silence of women combatants.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

#### **Gender and Identity Salience**

The opening salvo for addressing the misrepresentation of women interrogators during the GWOT is that being a woman is not a constant theme in the experiences of women interrogators. Women interrogators are not monolithic, static caricatures defined

only by the two dimensions of gender and profession. They participate in a system of interactions with the military at large, their colleagues and members of local populations, and themselves as individuals. Their race, class, age, nationality, and other identities, in addition to their gender, inform the roles they play and the meaning of those roles to them based on how those identities mobilize during the course of the interactions.

Chloe's narrative in Theme 1, for example, shows her entering the interrogation booth as an interrogator, an American, and a woman, but leaving as an American. It is likely based on how she describes herself elsewhere that she also entered as an Asian, a Korean, a speaker of English as a second language, an extrovert, and a comedian. But in this moment, her selection includes only 'interrogator', 'American', and 'woman', and her assessment, after much consideration, is that of those three, 'American' emerged as the most important. Chloe counts this interrogation as a failure, and, because her colleague, who is also an American interrogator but a man, fares no better with the detainee, she attributes that failure to circumstances beyond her control. Chloe serves as an example of how an interaction activates a package of identities much bigger than gender, and how dynamics of a woman interrogator's external locus of control prioritizes which identity within that package becomes the reference point for how she understands that experience upon reflection.

If the point of this research is to explore the experiences of women interrogators, then why muddy the waters with a discussion of how identities other than being a woman influence the meaning of those experiences? Feminist projects often rely on the isolation of the feminine from the masculine, or at the very least, the 'non-feminine'. This research

attempts to highlight experiences of interrogators as seen through their eyes as women.

That very starting point is an act of bifurcation separating women from men, and partition separating gender identity from other identities. To claim that the findings here are about women as distinct from men requires acknowledging the cross-cutting effects of race, nationality, age, class, and other personal characteristics interrogators find salient in the meaning of their experiences. Indeed, failing this requirement undermines the phenomenological method, and research on women interrogators would be just as well served by an in-depth case study of a single woman interrogator. As Spelman explains,

If I am justified in thinking that what it means for me to be a woman must be exactly the same as what it means for you to be a woman (since we both are women), I needn't bother to find out anything from you or about you in order to find out what it means for you to be a woman: I can simply deduce what it means from my own case. (Spelman, 1999, p. 154).

Tackling this challenge could be dismissed as the role of the researcher. It does not serve the interests of all women interrogators, however, to segregate their identities as women if we are to describe how they understand their experiences. As Salt took pains to emphasize following her review of the themes and concepts harvested from her interview, the most important factor framing her experiences as a woman interrogator was her lack of maturity at the time she served, not her gender. The experiences of women interrogators demonstrate that an analysis of gender must become, therefore, an analysis of the salience of gender in combination with other identity factors. This approach corresponds to approaches of the self often based in identity theory, which

views the self as an outcome of social structures, as well as a force shaping social stratification (Hunt, 2003). While apparent contradictions between being a woman and an interrogator shapes the experiences of women interrogators – about which there is more to say later – they understand their experiences as more than simply women or interrogators.

### **Negotiating the Emergence of ‘Womanliness’**

When their gender identity surfaces as a key variable, what being a woman means to women interrogators depends on the variety of contexts in which they are situated. The experiences of women interrogators represent the intersubjective project of identity development and self-realization. They enter the military at a stage in their lives where they have already passed through the process of primary socialization that informs them of what it is supposed to mean to be a woman. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that gender is almost consistently represented in mutually exclusive binary forms. Linguistically, women interrogators more commonly refer to women and men as females and males, as is common in military dialect. This usage reflects a mapping of gender onto bodies and reifies the physicality of gender identity. Women interrogators, however, express very little discomfort with this linkage because it represents the gender embodiment process with which they are familiar from society as a whole, then heightened in response to how the military interprets the logistical requirements of fielding a combat force composed of men and women: segregated bathrooms and showers, sleeping quarters, and so on. Frustration appears, rather, when faced with what

seems like a conflict between the theory within military culture that the mission always comes first and the application of that theory in the interactions of its members.

This frustration leads women interrogators to adopt negotiation strategies that bear some resemblance to those Furia identified (2009). Furia found women in the military defy their marginalization by adopting hypermasculine characteristics, hyperfeminine characteristics, or keeping a low profile to avoid being scrutinized. At times, women interrogators make a point of demonstrating how they possess physical, intellectual, and social skills that make them valuable members of the military, even when success in the military is measured by stereotypical masculine traits. The participants in this study, however, were more likely to attribute their use of this category of techniques as corresponding to natural traits they already possessed rather than those completely foreign to them. In other cases, women interrogators use perceptions about them as women to their advantage. They may hold out their gender as evidence their skills as relationship builders, communicators, and manipulators have been honed through their socialization as women. They may also use the chivalry of men as a means of avoiding tasks women interrogators feel distract them from the performance of their duties as HUMINTers. In terms of hiding stereotypically feminine traits, women interrogators concentrate their efforts, for example, on preventing others from seeing them cry as a coping mechanism for relieving stress. Women interrogators acknowledge that men and women are socialized to express emotions differently. When frustrated, women are more often conditioned to cry whereas men are more often conditioned to become angry. For women interrogators, the dichotomy between crying and becoming

angry represented one of the most detrimental distinguishing characteristics between them as women and the men with whom they interacted.

Regardless of the technique or combination of techniques they employ, women interrogators do not seek to reject their identities as women and do not hold out their experiences as examples of the inherent evil of gender roles per se. They do, however, identify a time and a place when the expression of stereotypical gender roles causes conflict that damages what they perceive as progress toward mission objectives. Women interrogators point to experiences where both men and women fail to adapt their behaviors to avoid violating role-prescribed behaviors for military service members. It is key to note that the very idea that individuals are responsible for failing to change their gender-informed social scripts rests on an underlying paradigm of gender as a socially-constructed role subject to redefinition as contexts change. This perspective also demonstrates women interrogators' insight into a general lack of role congruency between a person gendered as a woman and an organization gendered as masculine.

Kidder and Parks (2001) take up this issue of gender and role congruency in their work on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs). Society assigns roles based on gender, and that assignment informs expectations about one's suitability to an occupation based on gender stereotypes. Therefore, "roles 'external' to the organization interact with perceptions of in-role or performance criteria" (p. 953). As discussed in Chapter 2, the traditional approach strategy to analysis of these interactions tends to emphasize the burden on women in the military – a burden women interrogators do, in fact, reference. Women interrogators, however, also identify a burden on men. Men bring their gender

stereotypes about women into men's role performances as soldiers, but the military as an institution of "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 1998, p. 5) hinders men from seeing the influence of their own gender roles on their OCBs. The gendering of the military displaces masculinity from the individuals within it, leaving women in the military as its only members distinctly gendered (Kronsell, 2006). Women interrogators recognize they are an 'other' because they alone possess gender, and the otherness of their gendered states generates insight into the system and its structure in a way men cannot as readily see (Sasson-Levy, Levy, & Lomsky-Feder, 2011). Meanwhile, men's standpoint as insiders of the military context thwarts their ability to identify gender roles as a factor in their OCBs, degrading their ability to adapt those OCBs (Kidder & Parks, 2001). The experiences of women interrogators show how this handicap can lead men to demonstrate a lack of professional responsibility that can not only damages their careers, but also the achievement of military objectives.

Gender's influence on the experiences of women interrogators is not, however, immutable, and women interrogators offer a glimpse into how the participation of women in combat changes what being a woman means in application. As this change pertains to OCBs, relational demography theory suggests that as more women enter a masculine gendered occupation, the perception of gender incongruence decreases (Kidder & Parks, 2001). Natasha reflects the operationalization of this relationship when describing how others treated her as a woman changed when women soldiers became more common in her area of operations. The experiences of women interrogators further demonstrate that shifts in mission requirements can cause shifts in how the military structure processes the

meaning of women interrogators' gender identity. This shift may occur in spite of the military's preconceived ideas about the effectiveness of women interrogators in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Shannon, for example, spearheaded the overturn of her unit's policy of not allowing women interrogators to interrogate detainees in Afghanistan because she was the only one at the time who spoke Pashto and the unit needed a detainee to be interrogated immediately. Once she broke that glass ceiling, the reasoning behind it no longer seemed valid. This situation supports women interrogators' institutionally-constructed faith in the primacy of the military mission over socially-constructed assumptions about gender, suggesting that such a belief is neither naïve nor idealistic.

Over time, the military came to realize that the successful conduct of interrogation operations requires both women interrogators' "feminine capital" and their "female capital" (Sasson-Levy et al., 2011, p. 748). Feminine capital refers to women interrogators' perceived feminine qualities as defined by cultural norms. In the case of women interrogators during the GWOT, cultural norms include the interaction of multiple cultural processes. First, military culture cues its definition of femininity from feminine stereotypes found in general society. The masculine gendering of the military highlights the distinction between femininity and masculinity by othering the feminine. Role incongruence then informs the application of that distinction to women in the military by linking feminine social roles to the female bodies of women soldiers. Second, military leadership extends the concept of role incongruence to interrogation operations through an interpretation of the cultures of the GWOT environments, primarily the



Middle East and Southeast Asia. That interpretation begins with a series of cultural stereotypes about gender in GWOT environments – primarily that men from these cultures will not speak to women. Third, the phenomenology of the military experience in the GWOT exposes faults in that interpretation when, as it turns out, men from these cultures actually *will* speak to women interrogators. Combat conditions inevitably place women interrogators into contact with members of the local population, both in and out of interrogation facilities. Women interrogators' interactions with the local population serve to reveal that the intersection of the military with cultures of GWOT environments generates a variety of pathways women interrogators can access to achieve military objectives.

Women interrogators show themselves capable of performing as soldiers in combat zones, which increases the military's willingness to allow them access to combat environments. They also show themselves capable of performing as women in cultures of higher gender segregation than what it is *believed* about American and Western culture (Richter-Montpetit, 2016). Once the military realizes women interrogators' advantages in these regards, a paradigm emerges that women interrogators add value to interrogation operations because, as women, they represent feminine qualities that disarm barriers to relationship building in ways men – it is assumed – cannot. Being a woman, therefore, ceases being a liability and becomes instead a commodity.

Female capital refers to the perception of what it means for women interrogators to have a female body. Just as hegemonic masculinity assumes the gender of men within the military, the predominance of biological males in military institutions connects the

military context to the context of the male body. A hypermasculinized version of the male body serves, therefore, as the normative physical manifestation of the soldier (Goldstein, 2001; Connell, 1998), and especially so since the outbreak of the GWOT (Maruska, 2010). The presence of women interrogators in combat environments disrupts this hegemony. The socially-constructed association of the female body to the object of sexual desire reifies the separation between men's and women's bodies, but the occupation of female bodies in military uniforms challenges the male body's monopoly over the image of the soldier (Kronsell, 2006). The experience of women interrogators demonstrates that while the military does not resolve this institutional cognitive dissonance, it comes to acknowledge that women interrogators' ability to access romantic and familial social scripts allows the military to benefit from the effects of those scripts on interpersonal relationships between the interrogator and the detainee.

The sexualization of women's bodies is a frequent theme in feminist literature, and, as has been discussed in Chapter 2, serves as the dominant theme in the representation of women interrogators particularly. Women interrogators recognize the connection between their gender identity and their sexuality. All of the participants in this research have engaged in heterosexual relationships, for instance (though this is not meant to suggest all identify as exclusively heterosexual). In many cases those relationships occurred with other members of the military. These relationships are understandable, if not inevitable, given the intimacy of military life, and the familial role military relationships often assume (Taber, 2011). Military service functions as more of a lifestyle than a job, and the extraction service members experience from their civilian

lives, especially during combat deployments, frequently converts peers and colleagues to friends and prospective lovers.

When it comes to their roles as interrogators, women interrogators do not shy away from the practical reality that many social scripts between men and women, both in Western society and the societies where GWOT operations take place, contain elements of sexuality. The treatment of these elements in the literature, however, has functioned to discredit the nuance and range women interrogators recognize within them. On one hand, women interrogators reject the idea that a disarming smile is tantamount to a lap dance. On the other hand, women interrogators understand that sexuality represents in an interrogation the same dangers as in society as a whole. Women interrogators seem to share Prutow's perspective (2011) that, "women who endorse sexual aggression are not asserting gender equality but are instead assuming the underlying misogyny in the military" (p. 66). They would, however, seem to disagree with her demand that, "interrogation practices should be gender neutral" lest they inevitably, "force the self-marginalization of a female interrogator's body" (p. 66). On the contrary, the experiences of women interrogators suggest that acting as though having a female body makes no difference on the relationship between an interrogator and the vast majority of male detainees is naïve, and perhaps irresponsible. Interrogators are charged with developing rapport and managing relationships with detainees. Failing to account for the most obvious factors in those interactions constitutes an abrogation of an interrogator's duties, undermines the interrogator's professionalism, and desensitizes the interrogator to the line across which abuse and torture occur.

Being a woman during the GWOT does not hold a constant meaning for women interrogators. Rather, womanliness – as a point of intersection between femininity and the female body – is repeatedly redefined in response to structural changes during combat operations. These meanings are not infinite in their variety, but retain their connection to larger social structures informing gender identity and gender relations. Nevertheless, the experiences of women interrogators demonstrate a range of meanings otherwise shrouded within these larger structures. Adaptations appear to emerge as tipping points in women interrogators' experiences whereby a pre-determined constraint suddenly and unpredictably ceases to exist. Sometimes women interrogators identify the moment at which the tipping point occurs, as in Shannon's case. More often, these tipping points are seen only in retrospect, and the emergence is understood as a *fait accompli*. In all cases, these changes occur as a result of the presence of women interrogators in the operational environment, and their active participation in interrogation operations.

### **Harnessing Interrogation as a Complex Adaptive System**

The prior discussion addresses how women interrogators understand the meaning of being a woman in the context of their experiences during the GWOT. There, literature on the structures of gender relations and their permutations within military institutions provided a useful guide for navigating connections within the second superordinate theme. The discussion now turns to how women interrogators understand the meaning of being an interrogator. The findings here suggest that women interrogators essentially use the term “interrogation” to refer to two, different models of interrogation. The first model is that which most readily comes to the mind: the interaction of an interrogator and a

detainee. This model treats interrogation as a dyad conflict, attributing the characteristics of interrogation to the behaviors of two parties employing various communication strategies to reconcile what is most often presented as divergent goals. In 2006, Psychologists for Social Responsibility out of Georgetown University hosted a conference between psychologists working in the field of peace studies and military interrogators representing over a century of combined field experience (McCauley, 2007; Bennett, 2007). The resulting publication includes the article 'Toward a Social Psychology of Professional Military Interrogation' by Clark McCauley (2007), among the goals of which is to outline the psychological costs interrogators sustain during the performance of their duties. McCauley opens the article with the bold declaration: "The essence of successful interrogation is the relationship between interrogator and source" (p. 399).

The literature on interrogation almost exclusively adopts this dyad model, which is, in fact, reflected in the experiences of women interrogators themselves. When asked about what being a women interrogator meant to them, all of the participants initiated their responses by describing their bilateral interactions with detainees, despite the fact that the question itself did not explicitly prompt them to do so. The apparent monopoly of this representation may be traced to the representation of interrogation during their training where the focus rests on simulated exercises in interrogation booths, with all other skills taught as emerging from this core activity. The moment of direct interaction with a detainee in real world operations – especially the first time – reasonably represents an emotionally charged experience, as well. With further exploration, however, the

meaning of interrogation reveals a second model in which interrogation appears as a social network from which the meaning women interrogators' identities as interrogators emerge.

The emergence of women interrogators' professional identity occurs as result of the interaction between a much larger company of actors than represented in the dyad model. In addition to detainees, women interrogators collectively identify core actors in their experiences, including interpreters, military supervisors (primarily warrant officers and non-commissioned officers), intelligence analysts, and other interrogators (both men and women). Women interrogators also collectively identify in the data for this research peripheral actors in their experiences, including civilian friends and family, military trainers, military leaders (officers), non-interrogation related military service members (recruiters, combat arms soldiers, military lawyers, etc.), and other support staff at interrogation facilities (guards, medical personnel, etc.). Women interrogators describe each actor as playing distinct formal and informal roles. The behaviors of these actors evolve based on new information received during their interactions with each other. Not all actors interact directly with all others, especially as it concerns core and peripheral actors, which affects the contribution of actors to women interrogators' experiences and shapes what it means for women interrogators to be interrogators.

**Core Actors.** Without surrendering ground to the dyad model, the detainee understandably represents the *primus inter pares* of core actors. Women interrogators – like all interrogators, one supposes – experience a profound sense of anxiety the first time they enter the interrogation booth. For women interrogators, this moment can often be a

point of personal crisis rooted in the idea that woman interrogators are inherently incapable of interrogating effectively by virtue of their being women. Much of that perception emerges from a perceived contradiction between the stereotypical qualities an interrogator possesses and other qualities of the interrogator in question. The meaning of these qualities is often tightly intertwined with gender expectations to heighten the effect of the contradiction. The outcomes, however, lead to both positive and negative interactions within women interrogator's meaning-making process regarding their professional identities.

Women interrogators' interactions with detainees define their professional identities as relationship builders. They recognize that a detainee is being held against his or her will, and in that sense, they can empathize with detainees who react with hostility toward the interrogator. The job of every interrogator, however, is the same, even if each interrogation is itself the unique byproduct of the particular skills each interrogator and each detainee brings to the interaction: to collect intelligence information from human sources. Women interrogators highly prize the ability to develop their own style of interrogation, validated through field experience. The more that style eschews two dimensional stereotypes about interrogators or preconceived ideas about the inability to women to perform the job, the more satisfaction women interrogators express with their identities as interrogators. Furthermore, women interrogators value their ability to maintain control of their behaviors when facing frustration or uncertainty.

Detainees, of course, are not the exclusive target of women interrogators' relationship management efforts. Regardless of a women interrogator's linguistic skills,

at some point she will likely have to work with an interpreter. Interpreters are too often regarded as inanimate fixtures in the interrogation setting, but the experiences of women interrogators demonstrate that the influence of interpreters' personal biases and background intervene directly into the interrogator-detainee relationship.

[A] critical question remains regarding how the introduction of an interpreter affects the diagnostic value of various interrogative approaches. This issue relates to both the cognitive effects of interpreters interrupting the flow of an interrogation and filtering information obtained from the individual, and the potential loss of social influence when an interviewee communicates with the interpreter rather than the interrogator. (Evans, Meissner, Brandon, Russano, & Kleinman, 2010, p. 238)

Interpreters serve as the intermediaries between interrogators and detainees, but women interrogators recognize they are far from neutral third parties. Given the right relationship, interpreters can introduce a sense of teamwork into an interrogation, bolstering confidence and increasing positive perceptions of the interrogation experience. In the absence of that relationship, interpreters can represent a thorn in the interrogator's side, forcing her to break her focus on managing what is already the nearly overwhelming task of actively engaging in communication with a detainee, who may exude varying levels of cooperation depending on time and topic, while ensuring information of value to furthering the relationship, assessing a detainee's truthfulness and accuracy, and, ideally, responding to intelligence requirements is correctly recorded for later reporting.



While foreign language requirements for interrogators fluctuate over time, they are well established as a general trend within the profession and an interrogator's ability to speak a foreign language is generally considered *de rigueur* for properly trained interrogators, regardless of whether that interrogator actually serves in an operational environment where the language is used (Gonzales, 2013). In fact, all of the participants of this research possess foreign language skills, and used them whenever possible to supplement or replace interpreters during operations. When a woman interrogator must depend on an interpreter, the nature and functionality of her personal and professional relationship with that interpreter will influence whether that dependence symbolizes a productive, collegial partnership or an additional human resource management burden.

Women interrogators generally group their MI colleagues together as part of a team structure in which they participate. Those colleagues include their immediate supervisors who are generally warrant officers or non-commissioned officers, intelligence analysts, and other interrogators or, depending on the team composition, counterintelligence agents. On the aggregate, these colleagues serve as a resource for refining women interrogators' tradecraft and managing daily workloads. Due to the close-knit structure of the teams in deployed environments, they also often serve as women interrogators' primary source of social relationships, which includes, as already discussed, romantic partnerships. High operational tempos often force women interrogators to depend on these teammates for support and assistance. Women interrogators frequently cite that being a woman can function as a quality they and their team can leverage in their interactions with detainees. Likewise, other members of the

team offer other qualities that increase the team's collective range of capabilities, improving productivity, and generating higher job satisfaction despite high levels of stress.

Though women interrogators identify the importance of synergy under these conditions, the idealization of their professional identities can come into conflict with the threat they may perceive to their reputations from seeking help from others. Particularly within their teams, being a woman is more likely to be considered an advantage to the team's repertoire of skills. However, women interrogators recognize that for some interrogations, the principal barrier to success *will* be their gender identity. Women interrogators are more likely to view this barrier as an existential threat to the compatibility of their gender and professional identities, thanks to the rootedness of gender identity in women's concepts of the self in military institutions (Furia, 2009) and the predilection of gender issues to evoke defensive responses given the place of gender in military institutions (Callahan, 2016).

Women interrogators' relationships with their teammates seem to make the key difference in how much damage these dynamics cause to women interrogators' appreciation of their interrogator identities. During the period of time when the participants of this research entered the military, soldiers who enlisted directly into the field of MI received their basic and advanced training in mixed-gendered contexts (Chapman, 2009). These men soldiers became the HUMINTers, counterintelligence agents, and intelligence analysts serving along women of the same military occupational specialties. As discussed above in terms of demographic relational theory, men who are

‘native’ MI soldiers are, therefore, less inclined overall to regard women interrogators as role incongruent. As the ratio of ‘native’ to ‘reclassified’ MI soldiers shifts, women interrogators may find shifts in the influence of self-consciousness and insecurity on their perceptions of professional competence and, likely, their suitability as interrogators. Women interrogators’ increasing access to mentorship serves as a key example of this shift. Most of the participants of this research found that at the time they entered the military, they did not have access to mentors who were capable of assisting them to figure out how to place their gender and identities into a context that facilitated rather than threatened their effectiveness as interrogators. Over time, however, these participants have often become those mentors for others, filling in the gaps for new women interrogators that participants identified early in their own career development. The interactions of these core actors lead to the emergence of varied and, at times, contradictory meanings women interrogators assign to their professional identities as they are represented within the MI subculture.

**Peripheral Actors.** When those identities concern the external environment – the world beyond the cohort of interrogators – their meanings emerge from the interactions of peripheral actors. Women interrogators describe, not surprisingly, how the general population poorly understands MI in general and interrogation specifically. Movies and television serve as the only the reference points civilian friends and family members have for interrogators. Women who become interrogators often provide the only other representation civilians have for what it means to be an interrogator, but women interrogators find little return on investment from challenging the interrogator archetype.

As women interrogators gain professional credibility through experience during deployments, some friends and family begin to take pride in women interrogators' accomplishment. Women interrogators often experience this pride, however, as pride in women interrogators' perceived successes in spite of the perceived inevitability of their failure. Their identities as interrogators then vacillate between the contradictory pleasantness of feeling 'special' and bitterness of feeling misunderstood in the company of civilians.

Misunderstandings about interrogators do not end with passage into the military environment, and many women assume their identities as interrogators only after having gained real world experience in the role. In theory, military trainers should foster a trainee's identity as an interrogator during certification courses to become a HUMINTeR. Unfortunately, women interrogators' experiences reveal a distinct disparity between trainers' formal roles teaching interrogation tradecraft and the influence of what women interrogators reference as some trainers' prejudices about women, lack of familiarity with the cultures of GWOT environments, and lax standards of professional conduct. The data show women interrogators generally acknowledge that the sudden shift from the post-Cold War security environment to the post-9/11 context led to a temporal lag between the contexts in which military trainers acquired the field experience qualifying them to train new interrogators and the contexts of real world operations for which new interrogators needed preparation. Military trainers, therefore, attempted to 'fill in the blanks' left by their lack of authentic understanding of the cultures from which detainees in the GWOT were the most likely to be extracted. These findings reflect the findings of research

conducted in 2006 (around the time most of the participants in this study received their training) that the training of military interrogators remained focused on a pre-2001 conventional military threat scenario and that training was failing to prepare interrogators properly for the GWOT operational environment (Thacker, 2006). Combined with trainers' preconceived ideas about the insurmountable challenges women would face interrogating detainees in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, women interrogators can face simulation training exercises seemingly design to teach them how to accept failure. Women interrogators often exit their initial training under the impression they must somehow compensate for being women in order to become legitimate interrogators.

Military leaders' ideas about women interrogators seem to share many of the stereotypes about women and interrogation held by women interrogators' civilian friends and families. Even MI officers supposedly familiar with the basic principles of HUMINT collection, including interrogation, often lack sufficient training and skills to evaluate women interrogators' performances. A women interrogator who dons stereotypical interrogator behaviors – aggressive approach strategies, yelling, etc. – can acquire a reputation for being an excellent interrogator in part thanks to the perception that as a woman, her adoption of these behaviors requires even more effort than had she been a man. Organizational research has found a positive correlation between perceived reputation and observable job performance (Hochwarter, Ferris, Zinko, Arnell, & James, 2007; Liu et al., 2007), as well as a positive correlation between perceived reputation and job satisfaction (Hall, Zinko, Perryman, & Ferris, 2009). Women interrogators overall – seemingly motivated by faith in the importance of their mission – do not assign positive

meanings this dynamic, and experience a sense of schadenfreude when women benefitting from it ultimately prove ineffective as interrogators.

Furthermore, the nature of contingency operations in combat environments can leave interrogators functionally distant from their leaders so that their leaders' influence extends very little beyond administrative tasks, leaving women interrogators in positions as trusted agents. They also assume responsibility for the management of interrogation operations when they intersect with the operations of support personnel, such as guards at detention facilities or legal advisors at higher echelons of command and control. Women interrogators can suddenly move from being the most likely to fail as interrogators to being subject matter experts – as much in perception as in fact – possessing referent power beyond their objective credentials. This power imbues women interrogators with a sense of ownership over the representation of interrogation to non-MI personnel. Women interrogators prove capable of understanding that being interrogators often provides them with a unique social capital that, when combined with their relationship skills, allows them to access resources to which they may not have access already. An important example of this access is the ability of women interrogators to ride along with combat patrols outside detention facilities, which increases familiarity with their operational environments and allows them to interpret how detainees describe the world outside the facility.

**The Dancing Landscape.** The structure represented in the participants' narratives reflects all the necessary components of a complex adaptive system: diverse actors performing distinct functions, interdependence and interconnectedness between actors,

and adaptation in actors' attitudes and behaviors in response to each other (Eidelson, 1997). Only in light of the second model of interrogation can we connect women interrogators' identities as interrogators to their identities as women in the military while accounting for salient components of women interrogators' environment. Godfrey attempts to make this connection based on her interview with Staff Sergeant Jones (2012), but the result lacks depth because the research includes only one participant, the only other individual represented is Jones' ex-girlfriend, and all other actors appear as static, monolithic collectives. Increasing the number of participants and building stronger connections between their interactions with women interrogators at the center of those interactions reveal the complex adaptive nature of the social structure that informs women interrogators' understandings of their experiences.

Women interrogators represent their understanding of what it means to be an interrogator in terms of what McPherson and Ranger-Moore call "the dancing landscape" (1991, p. 28). Over time and through interaction with others, women interrogators improve their understanding of what it means to be a woman and an interrogator. That optimization takes place in a much bigger context of actors also attempting to optimize dynamically. How different would the experiences of this research's participants been regarding their interaction with, say, combat arms soldiers if they had taken place *after* women had successfully graduated from the Army Ranger School (Tan, 2015) and become infantry officers (Tan, 2016)? How different would the experiences of women interrogators have been during the early days of GWOT had military trainers at that time already understood what being a woman would mean for women interrogators'?

interactions with detainees in the Middle East and Southeast Asia? As actors adapt their behaviors seeking optimization in response to other actors and in response to shifts in the external environment, the landscape of the system undulates. Out of this dancing landscape, novel innovations can periodically emerge (Miller & Page, 2007). One such innovation in the context of how women interrogators understand their experiences in the GWOT is how feminine stereotypes assigned to women serve to increase women interrogators' contribution to the military mission in combat operations.

### **The Gentle Interrogator?**

Despite doubts, warnings and dismissals, women interrogators have proven themselves remarkably effective at interrogation in the GWOT. Their unexpected successes represent perhaps the most powerful influence on how women interrogators understand their identities as women and as interrogators during the GWOT. Participants who were interrogators during the early days of the GWOT were told they would be ineffective as interrogators, but this perspective shifted over time so that women interrogators eventually came to be told that as women they held an advantage in the interrogation booth over men. This advantage derives from the very role incongruence indicating women are inherently less suited as military combatants.

Regardless of the justification, military forces detain people in an act of violence that restricts detainees' liberty. Detainees, therefore, enter interrogations by force and reasonably expect interrogators will behave as an extension of that force. When faced with a women interrogator, however, the contradiction between the social role she occupies as a woman and the professional role she occupies as a member of the military



force who detained the detainee generates cognitive dissonance. Women interrogators are then able to exploit this cognitive dissonance by reframing their standpoint in relation to the detainee. This reframing can involve encouraging the detainee to perceive the interrogator more as a woman than as an interrogator, which creates space for relationship building on grounds that would not have otherwise been available. The experiences of women interrogators demonstrate that the grounds for this new frame are built on the pervasive stereotype that women do not represent a threat.

‘Threat’ holds a particular meaning in the GWOT context. Prior to 9/11, the military in general was already an institution of masculine hegemony, and as such claimed a monopoly on the representation of masculinity in American culture (Goldstein, 2001). After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States entered a security posture that fostered a permissive environment for the emergence of hypermasculinity, characterized by the exercise of violent retribution against any perceived, liberally construed danger to national security (Maruska, 2010). As such, members of the United States military served as the agents of that violence.

The combination of a hypermasculine image of male soldiers and the preservation of traditional images of women as civilians, even as they join the military, are symptomatic of a hypergendered empire in the United States. As Enloe argues, militarized masculinities and femininities represent and reproduce the gendering of the states in which they reside. The hypermasculinity of the current militarized masculinity shows the intense focus on power and virility in the United States

today, while the emphasis on traditional femininity shows the need to appear (tender and) just. (Sjoberg, 2010c, p. 216)

A significant amount of research has already devoted itself to examining how the torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere connects to the feminization of the ‘enemy’ (see for example Caldwell, 2012; Peterson, 2010; Wilcox, 2010; Ahmed, 1992). While the findings presented in this dissertation refute the authority of these narratives over the representation of women interrogators, this objective does not compete with the description of torture as a means of violent subordination and dehumanization, paralleling the production and defense of masculinity’s primacy over femininity in society as a whole. According to the experiences of women interrogators, detainees enter interrogation expecting aggressive treatment, if not violent abuse. Seeing a woman interrogator disrupts that expectation, providing an entry point for women interrogators to seize the rapport building initiative. It appears, then, that women interrogators are exploiting the fear of torture to their advantage. This interpretation, however, fails to account for the vast majority of women interrogators’ experiences with detainees represented in this research. If the perception of women interrogators as non-threatening relies exclusively on detainees’ relief at feeling less likely to be tortured, then women interrogators would not describe how the perception contributes to their ability to interrogate a detainee after the detainee’s first interrogation experience. Instead, women interrogators find almost consistently that in almost every interaction, detainees view women interrogators as women first and interrogators second, if at all.

Detainees in the GWOT view women interrogators as not only non-threatening in the physical sense, but also in the psychological sense. Detainees are overwhelmingly represented as being less defensive and less emotionally restrained in their interactions with women interrogators. Detainees exhibit these behaviors upon immediate contact with a women interrogator regardless of the specific interrogation context (in an enclosed facility as opposed to in a field setting, for example). Furthermore, detainees are more prone to associate women interrogators with detainees' women family members than men interrogators with detainees' men family members. This may be understood as detainees' attempts to reconcile the contradiction of being interrogated by a woman by assigning to a woman interrogator a role in which the detainee is more conditioned to seeing a woman in settings of intimacy similar to that of an interrogation.

Women interrogators recognize this dynamic as emerging from detainees' association between of women's bodies and the feminine gender. Detainees' responses to women interrogators indicate that the physical representation of the interrogator's biological sex evokes cultural meanings about gender and between-gender relations, which in turn produces women interrogators' principle understanding about the nature of their identities as women interrogators – that of a non-threat. In a hypermasculine security environment, non-threatening equates to functionally useless when it comes to interrogation. The representation of interrogation women interrogators often received in training during the early years of the GWOT, and still often receive from the general public, echo Lagouranis:

[W]hen people hear I was an interrogator, they get very interested. It seems like many of them think of my job as a kind of duel, a face-to-face match, a test of power and a test of wills. When I was in training, I thought of interrogation like that, and I thought I'd have a chance to save lives, even if I never rose to the level of 'hero.' So I went into my first interrogations with gusto, and this enthusiasm came out in the form of Fear Up Harsh, a specific 'approach' to a prisoner that attempts to raise his level of fear, and does so in a harsh manner—lots of yelling, maybe some physical intimidation, like slamming a fist on the table or flinging furniture around. It established me as the powerful one in the room; if it was a duel, I won. (Lagouranis & Mikaelian, 2007, pp. 2-4)

The contradiction between being non-threatening and the representation of interrogation as a 'test of wills' reifies women interrogators' gender identity in much the same way that role incongruence mobilizes feminine gender identity in the context of the military institution as a whole. Women in the military in general are faced with tough choices for negotiating this role incongruence, but each choice has its costs (Taber, 2011; Crowley, 2010; Furia, 2009). If they abandon their military commitments without resolving this contradiction, as they often can during their initial training or at the end of their term of enlistment, then they resign themselves to the idea that their gender and professional identities are inherently discordant. Once deployed to a combat environment, their options for walking away from their duty obligations are severely limited, and they must bear the burden of their own cognitive dissonance, act out against it, or reject the logic of intrinsic incompatibility altogether.

When women interrogators are new to the field of interrogation, they are more likely beholden to the chain of concepts linking interrogation to power, power to masculinity, masculinity to aggression, aggression to compliance, and compliance to disclosure. This linkage activates women interrogators' self-consciousness regarding their professional identities, and makes them more likely to adopt aggressive approach strategies toward detainees in order to compensate for the perception of weakness. The logic that a woman is naturally unsuited to be an interrogator is rooted in the construction of the woman *and* the interrogator. Women interrogators are seemingly forced to adopt interrogation approach strategies that degrade their effectiveness – the quote from Lagouranis above ends with, “But did I get intelligence? Save lives? Protect America? I don’t believe I did any of those things” (Lagouranis & Mikaelian, 2007, p.4) – thus reifying the inevitability of their failure. Here, Butler’s position on the production of gender can be read as equally applicable to the production of the interrogator:

The authors of gender become entranced by their own fictions whereby the construction compels one's belief in its necessity and naturalness. The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions that are alternately embodied and disguised under duress. (Butler, 1988, p. 522)

With experience, self-awareness, and reflection, women interrogators abandon compliance as the precursor to interrogation’s desired end state in favor of cooperation, thereby creating new pathways between interrogation and disclosure. In this sense, women interrogators are not simply reconciling the conflict between their gender and

professional identities, because such a conclusion attributes an ahistorical character to those identities. Rather, it is through their experiences that women interrogators produce a new identity of what it means to be a woman and an interrogator; identities are achieved through struggle. Interrogation operations are often high stress environments where human relationships become women interrogators' chief weapons system. Interrogation requires more conflict management skills than merely coercion. The contexts in which interrogation occurs, in fact, contradict basic paradigms about combat operations. In the detention facility, interrogators' experiences bear no resemblance to the experiences of those in the combat arms who circulate throughout the battle field. Even when interrogators conduct their operations in field settings, the very nature of interrogators' duties embed them in the human, rather than the physical, terrain.

The experiences of women interrogators show that successful coping mechanisms generate both positive and negative effects on their own emotional and psychological well-being. As contributors to re-writing the script for what it means to be an effective interrogator, they demonstrate the importance of empathy toward and relationship building with detainees. At the same time, failing in their mission has grave consequences. All interrogators are likely to internalize failure in ways that damage their professional esteem, those damages can be particularly severe for women interrogators because failures are less likely understood as the result of women interrogators *making* a mistake, and more likely understood them *being* a mistake. Compartmentalizing their empathy and seeing detainees as objects rather than people with whom woman

interrogators have authentic emotional connections can serve as a defense mechanism against this damage.

Thus, the interrogator must find a space between empathy and exploitation, between feeling empathy and using empathy. The interrogator cannot be a psychopath or sociopath—someone defective in empathy, who sees other human beings only as means to his own ends. Rather, the interrogator must be an artist of empathy while maintaining at least some of the distancing of a sociopath. The challenge for the interrogator is to maintain a distance that does not lose sight of the humanity of the source. (McCauley, 2007, p. 408)

The balance between empathy and objectification is not struck mechanically, evenly, or consistently. It results from an active meaning making process directly tied to how women interrogators understand their identities as women and interrogators. The stress and speed of operations hinder women interrogators from recognizing in the moment how negotiation of their gender and professional identities sponsors an evolution of the very meaning of those identities. These new identities emerge unpredictably and exponentially from women interrogators' active engagement in the GWOT.

### **Advancements to the Field of Feminist Security Studies**

Western culture socially constructs sex, gender, and sexuality via social discourse. That communication assigns hierarchies that generate inequality between groups, which in turn translates into an internalization of inferiority/superiority by individuals of each class. The story of women interrogators resists the discourse of inequality and undermines the determinism of inferiority; not because, as women, women interrogators

have never been subject to misogyny, and not because, as military interrogators, they have never been the perpetrators of violence upon others. The story of women interrogators offers its most important contribution by casting into doubt the validity of zero-sum thinking about the participation of women in institutions of armed combat. This thinking assumes that every woman combatant represents the betrayal of feminine ideals, or that the increasing penetration of women into institutions of power represents a relative reduction in the power of men. The principle emergent phenomenon of women interrogators' experiences in the GWOT is thus: *An entire class of agents of military violence – a class specifically represented some of the most deviant among such agents – operating in a hypermasculine security environment fulfill their mission objectives by virtue of being non-threatening.*

### **Structural Symbolic Interactionism**

The individual-level processes described in this research often correlate to patterns found in traditional symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism, in its original formulation, focused on how actors interact with the world around them, identified both the actor and the external world as dynamically constructed through that interaction, and emphasized actors' interpretation of the social world as an act of agency (Ritzer, 2008). Women interrogators identify symbolic patterns related to gender and conflict through their interactions with others and with themselves. Self-reflexivity then facilitates an analysis of multiple courses of action that lead them to modify the meaning of these patterns. These modifications re-define their standpoints as women and as adversarial agents of a military force. Women interrogators' thoughtful responses to



stimuli often emerge as a rejection of the constraints imposed upon them by the symbols of their gender and their status as interrogators. In this way, women interrogators exercise their capacity to create unique lives of meaning, thus demonstrating their autonomy.

Women interrogators' endowment of meaning on the external world on its surface refutes principles of behavioralism and structural functionalism, which tend to view actors as passive recipients of information rather than active co-creators of reality (Ritzer, 2008; Hausmann, Jonason, & Summers-Effler, 2015).

Critics of symbolic interactionism, however, have subsequently pointed to two faults in its analytical framework relevant to the experiences of women interrogators. First, symbolic interactionism traditionally frames actors' agency as in competition with actors' psychological boundaries (Hausmann, Jonason, & Summers-Effler, 2015; Ritzer, 2008, Hunt, 2003; Stryker, 1987). Women interrogators describe their negotiation processes in a way that reflects the recognition of gender as a social construct but their desire to expand the parameters of what it means to be a woman is not rooted in a wholesale rejection of femininity. While the structure women interrogators collectively challenge is the structure of the military itself, which proves through the lens of women interrogators' experiences to be the product social practice much in the way of gender, the structure of gender remains. Women interrogators do not seek a revolutionary overthrow of gender relations, as one might expect from an agent exercising absolute independence from imposed constraints. Indeed, one of the principle advantages of being a woman interrogator is the ability to exploit the existing structure of gender relations. "While the women in the military might, though experience, realize how gender

structures work in their lives, they might not want, or be able, to connect those experiences to general power practices in society” (Kronsell, 2006, p. 127).

Acknowledging these facets is not a rejection of women interrogators’ autonomy, but a recognition of the embeddedness of that autonomy.

The second critique of traditional symbolic interactionism is its attention on micro-processes at the expense of macro-processes (Stryker, 1987). Women interrogators re-shape the symbols of women and interrogators for their own, individual purposes. However, shifts in macro level processes clearly emerge from these micro level adaptations, which symbolic interactionism treated with skepticism (Carter & Fuller, 2015). The experience of women interrogators during the GWOT shows that the projection of ‘woman’ as a symbol of the interior life, separated from the exterior life of a combat force in a foreign country, and the application of that phenotype onto women interrogators initially thrust upon women interrogators by virtue of macro-level social inequalities (Hunt, 2008; Cook & Rice, 2006) evolved by virtue of women interrogators’ participation in the military structure. As women interrogators interacted with a combat environment that explicitly banned them from combat operations, and often even from the conduct of their duty positions as interrogators, they generated shifts in how they were employed at the tactical level of their units. These changes in their employment led to changes in unit policies that transformed their status as women from that of a barrier to that of a skill identifier. The association of women with relationship building and the demonstrated successes of women in interrogation operations offer concrete evidence that

in at least one aspect, the military not only can, but *must* achieve its objectives through more than merely sheer coercive force.

A specific study such as this cannot empirically establish micro-to-macro linkages (McLeod & Lively, 2006). It may be worthwhile, however, to speculate on the connection between micro-level shifts to greater macro-level shifts in the military's approach to operations. Only within the last few years, official policies toward the meaning of gender in general, and women service members in particular, have evolved considerably within the context of the US military's experiences during the GWOT. In 2013, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta directed the military to conduct a three-year study on how its various services would implement opening combat positions for women and to determine the merits of any conceivable exceptions (Spivak, 2016). Though the White House provided no explicit reasoning behind this move, it was preceded by a letter from General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, publicly expressing the intent of senior military leaders, "to rescind the direct combat exclusion rule for women and to eliminate all unnecessary gender-based barriers to service" (Bumiller & Shanker, 2013). General Dempsey's explanation for his own shift in perspective was surprisingly personal:

In an interesting parallel to the feminist slogan that 'the personal is political'...General Dempsey arrived in Baghdad [in 2003] as a division commander. He climbed aboard a Humvee and asked the driver where he was from. Then Dempsey slapped the turret gunner on the leg and asked, 'And who are you?' The reply was, 'I am Amanda.' A stunned Dempsey processed the

revelation. A female soldier was protecting a division commander in a combat zone. Dempsey realized that much had changed on the battlefield and the policy needed to reflect those realities. (Eager, 2016, p. 179)

In 2015, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter directed the military to submit plans for its implementation of gender-integrated combat arms duty positions without exception (Chappell, 2015; Tobia, 2015; Spivack, 2016). Worth noting, senior military leaders influencing national policies in 2013 were the commanders of military units during the first decade of the GWOT. The accumulation of personal experiences such as the one General Dempsey described seems to have led to an increasing understanding at the highest levels that the time had come for the services to acknowledge the reality of women serving in combat positions and to account for the needs of women exposed to the effects of combat (Ritchie & Naclerio, 2015).

Beyond the influence on policy makers regarding gender integration, the contribution of women service members to active missions may also have affected the broader evolution of the US military's approach to operations. Consider, for example, the emergence of the 'hearts and minds' concept, which appeared first in the framework of counter-insurgency operations, and later extended into the development of military doctrine on stability operations (Dorough-Lewis, 2015; Taw, 2012). This emergence formed part of a growth in the military's conflict management strategy that came to recognize stability operations as equal in importance as offensive and defense operations (Dorough-Lewis, 2016). This recognition stands in tension with the representation of the military as a lethal force. For instance, contrast the vigorous argument of the late Colonel

Harry Summers that the U.S. military must not, “go out and seek out these outside missions and pull away from the primary mission of why the military was created, which essentially is to kill people and destroy things in the name of the United States” (Gottlieb & La Rocque, 1993) with the opening statement of then-General David Petraeus’ 2008 guidance to Coalition Forces in Iraq that they must, “work to provide the [Iraqi] people security, to give them respect, to gain their support, and to facilitate establishment of local governance, restoration of basic services, and revival of local economies” (p. 2). The experiences of women interrogators provide insight into one facet of the military’s adaptation in response to the complexities of contemporary operational environments. By doing so, women interrogators have – simply by their presence and their active participation in military operations – sponsored new possibilities for what the military could become.

### **‘Regendering’ the Military**

Given the persistence of gender structures and the likelihood of micro-macro interactions, the experiences of women interrogators advance social interactionist theory engaging, “the dialectic of being and emergence, leading to a dialectical interactionism” (Perinbanayagam, 1985, p. xv). Likewise, they connect structural symbolic interactionism to projects of feminist security studies that,

[T]ake us beyond the dilemma of whether to focus on the inclusion of women in institutions and policymaking processes or on the valorization of a different, ‘womanly’ way of doing things, and focuses on transforming the institution or

policymaking process so that gender is no longer a structure of inequality

constitutive of that institution or policy. (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 7)

The systems approach taken in the analysis of women interrogators' narratives reveals the potential transformative effect of women interrogators' participation in the GWOT on the military as an institution of gendered practice.

Within the field of feminist security studies, liberal and difference feminism seem to compete for control over the narrative of women in conflict. Liberal feminists want more female bodies in positions male bodies currently occupy. This inclusion, they claim, will destabilize the assignment of power to men. Difference feminists want feminine values of peace and cooperation to impeach masculine practices of power and control. This reversal, they claim, will demilitarize concepts of security. The experiences of women interrogators provide support for an alternative approach, which has emerged over the last decade under the post-modern concept of 'gender mainstreaming' (Rees, 2002; Rees, 2005; Walby, 2005). Gender mainstreaming advocates for the simultaneous pursuit of liberal and difference feminist security projects by which the participation of more women in military institutions leads to the military's increasing adoption of feminine conflict analysis, management, and resolution strategies with which women are socialized in the broader culture. While women will inevitably appropriate masculine gendered conflict approaches due to their pervasiveness in military institutional culture, men will also inevitably appropriate feminine gendered approaches due to their effectiveness in certain types of military missions. The result serves to displace gender

dichotomies, and, by extension, the gender hierarchies that place men above women (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016).

This research provides some recommendations for how such a ‘regendering’ might be pursued without such a project becoming a social experiment so embroiled in controversy that it fails on its face. First, the broader field of HUMINT collection serves as an excellent starting point because human relationships and interaction rest at the core of HUMINT collection operations. The perceived and constructed differences between men and women constitute a key dynamic in the relationships between all actors in the complex adaptive system not formally or intrinsically present in other types of military operations. As HUMINTers interface with members of various populations from a wide range of characteristics, it behooves the military to invest in a diverse population of HUMINTers who contribute to greater awareness of other ways of living and interpreting the world. While this diversity would include more women, the similar benefits would likely result from increasing the diversity of other identities as well.

Second, women interrogators often only make sense of their experiences in retrospect and given distance from their periods of active operations. Success in this endeavor heightens their individual contributions to the military mission and their positive effects on others. However, women interrogators often feel they are fighting through this process on their own. As this concerns all interrogators, “The Army understands the physical risks of being shot at better than the psychological risks of being an interrogator” (McCauley, 2007, p. 409). The military would be wise to increase its mental health support specifically to HUMINTers, not only to ease their transition out of

combat operations, but also as a sustained program of professional development aimed at assisting HUMINTers to decipher the meanings of what they have learned in the field so those meanings may be reinvested in their approach to operations in the future.

Third, the military must adopt training practices that mentor individual trainees toward successful demonstrations of proficiency in their training tasks. The criticality of this recommendation extends not only to HUMINTers, more generally to all military occupational specialties for whom interpersonal relationships constitute a core function, such as in the mental health, medical, spiritual well-being, and legal services. Though this research focuses on the experiences of women during interrogation training, it is reasonable that military trainers' pre-conceived ideas about the suitability of military service members of a variety of gender identities for many other roles disenfranchise trainees from full participation in the military. This marginalization threatens morale, retention, and growth, which ultimately wastes military resources and thwarts the introduction of new knowledge, skills, and abilities the military requires in order to respond to changes in the contemporary operational environment – regardless of the military's intentions, explicit or otherwise, for its institutional gendering. Of particular concern during training is the representation of cultures in the military's areas of operations, which far too easily neglect opportunities for productive interaction in favor of sweeping caricatures that prime military service members for failure.

### **Implications for the Practice of Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

Given the role that teams of intelligence professionals living in close quarters play during operations, productivity within the field of military intelligence depends heavily



on small group organizations. The military as a whole is, of course, an organization composed of a group of elements performing independent actions towards a mutually-dependent product. As such, responsibly addressing how the regendering of the military affects macro-level organizational performance requires special attention to the effects of micro-level dynamics on group autonomy and coordination with the larger organizational structure (Schein, 1988). As the experiences of women interrogators indicate when viewed in the context of larger structural changes over the recent history of the US military, organizations often react to, rather than predictively engage, the influence of increasing numbers of members whose stereotypical characteristics may *prima facie* contradict organizational identity. Along with these internal changes, organizations must manage the influence of environmental changes, such as the US military's experience within a contemporary operational environment emphasizing hybrid warfare and demanding the simultaneous conduct of offensive, defensive, and stability operations.

Organizations – military, corporate, or otherwise – must adapt to environmental changes or risk falling short of their goals, targets, or objectives. Large-scale organizational change, therefore, requires a network-wide approach organizational learning (Mohrman & Mohrman, 1989), which, if it is to manage structural conflict, may require the assistance of an outside interventionist. Fritz (1996) put forth of model of structural conflict that occurs when competing activities of the organization undermine its ability to produce, describing conditions where a resolution to one tension evokes another tension elsewhere in the system (1996). Part of the difficulty of identifying structural conflicts for effective intervention, which is clearly within the best interests of the

organization, is that members of the organization by definition have challenges escaping their internal understanding of its workings in order to conduct the external assessment necessary to find the 'joints' and 'levers' that are candidates for treatment. Designing a conflict management system in conjunction with an organization demands an understanding of the organization's integrated structure through a systems analysis approach. Each part operates in tandem with others, which in sum expend resources and produce outputs. Similar to the laws of biology, organizations develop in response to their external environments. Some are more susceptible to external pressures than others, and often those pressures constitute an existential threat to the organization itself (Silverman, 1970). And similar to the law of physics, activities within the organization produce tensions that repel and attract its elements. When those tensions overwhelm the ability of the organization to produce outputs, it stagnates or declines under the weight of a decreasing return on energy investments (Fritz, 1996). The constant state of change all organizations experience may constitute advancement or oscillation, using the terms of Fritz' model, but the influences of an evolving external environment, a developing institutional memory, the coming and going of organizational members, the flow of resource inputs and outputs, and other forces do not cease their shaping of the organization, regardless of the appearance of stasis.

When faced with a turbulent environment, an organization's response to the perceived threat may activate maladaptive defense mechanisms. These mechanisms in their most pathological include dogmatically reasserting the organization's core identity at the expense of those on the periphery; seeking clarity of the organization's purpose

through polarizing, zero-sum binaries; and suppressing internal progress as a means of compensating for the organization's anxiety toward its ability to manage external change (Babüroğlu, 1988). The US military during the GWOT might serve as a case study in this regard, given its post-9/11 investments in a hypermasculine identity and aggressive tactics. Both responses conceivably precluded the presence of women interrogators in any form other than that of the lurid sadist or fallen woman, for which women interrogators acquired their reputations. And yet, as this research shows, women interrogators proved capable of deciphering the system in which they were embedded – often doing so in order to exploit financial and personal opportunities – and navigating disincentives to their contribution to the military's organizational mission. Women interrogators' understanding of the military system emerged in no small part thanks to their position as members whose presence the military institution's maladaptive responses masked. As individuals, women interrogators were capable not merely of functional survival, but of innovating pathways to achieve the mission objective in ways unique to the women's simultaneous status as insiders and outsiders. As further suggested, the second- and third-order effects women interrogators' experiences likely participated in informing macro-level institutional changes within the military, strengthening the “transactional interdependencies that make adaptation to a changing environment possible through self-regulation and self-direction” (Babüroğlu, 1988, p. 207).

The literature on organizational development and conflict management systems has emerged as an approach to organizational structural analysis and the creation of systematized intervention strategies tailored to harness the advantages of naturally

occurring conflict in an organization while decreasing its destructive influences (Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988). Systems design in the field of conflict analysis and resolution, however, is not only for the purpose of understanding organizational tensions in its pursuit of designing effective interventions. It is also for the purpose of reframing how the organization sees itself and its assets, including its human resources. The findings regarding women interrogators presented in this study would suffice had they held implications for conflict management systems design only within the parameters of gender. When conflict interventionists approach their analysis of organizations, they must not fail to identify the hidden histories within the organization, whose presence marks untapped potential and whose exploration may reveal advantages already organic to the organization. The interventionist should incorporate an analysis of those hidden histories into a system design, either to support the attachments functions of moving the organization into a next stage of growth or to provide space for separation between the organization and attachments which influence its decline. This strategy, however, offers advantages regardless of the hidden histories' relationship to gender.

### **Limitations**

This research has clear limitations, many of which come as a result of the research method itself. First, it is important to keep in mind the difficulty of extracting gender identity from the participants' experiences. This study's results demonstrate it is feasible to produce findings given the constraint of a single question of analysis spanning the narratives of multiple participants. However, participants' narratives include individual novelties that were withheld from the analysis because they did not correspond

sufficiently to a core, shared representation of lived experience that phenomenology seeks to produce. Smith acknowledged this drawback as an area of future development for IPA, suggesting that a deep exploration of individual cases as separate studies would increase IPA's responsiveness to its ideographic goals (Smith, 2004).

Next, IPA is, by its nature, highly susceptible to researcher interpretation. In this case, my own professional identity as a HUMINTer facilitated access to a pool of potential participants who typically resist disclosure to outsiders, and provided a shared understanding of context and professional jargon. However, being an insider can be critiqued as being too close to the subject, which is why the research methodology was adapted to allow participants a review of their individual analysis. While all participants had an opportunity to correct misconceptions of their individual thematic analysis, only four participants provided feedback that led to adjustments in the analysis. This level of participation is understandable given the time horizons involved in the research process (it took two years to complete all of the individual analyses) and the geographic distance between the researcher and the participants (who were living all over the United States and Europe) during the research. However, it must be acknowledged that over half of the researcher's original individual analysis entered the participants' group analysis unaltered.

Finally, the research presented here barely scratches the surface of filling the gap in understanding about women interrogators, so great is the silence. This study is the only qualitative research so far conducted that includes the perspectives of multiple women interrogators. While analyzing the stories of the eight participants for this research

resulted in findings that elucidate women interrogators' participation in the GWOT and the effects of that participation on the meaning of women interrogators, the work remains daunting. It is important by extension to acknowledge that women interrogators' representing a non-threat during interrogations was as a result of the interaction of a complex adaptive system populated by a particular set of actors adapting their behaviors in the environment of the GWOT. It is unlikely, therefore, that the same phenomenon would emerge out of other actors following other rules in other environments. Therefore, this research's findings must be understood within the confines of its context and caution warranted for attempts to generalize too far beyond.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The goals of this research concentrate on the question of women's experiences specifically within the field of interrogation, which, for reasons already referenced, remains poorly understood both within the military and in civilian society. The presence of the gender dichotomy in the participants' narratives, therefore, clearly represent the presence of men and the experiences of men interrogators, which, however, are not explored beyond what they mean to the experiences of women. For example, the findings here should not be taken as a claim that men interrogators *cannot* benefit from the advantages of being non-threatening because they are men. It is, rather, to say that men interrogators do not benefit from these advantages *because* they are men. Pathways exist for men interrogators to exploit culturally-informed homosocial communication strategies (Kiesling, 2005), which may improve understanding about the gendering of communications within interrogations. In terms of a broader gender analysis emphasizing

collective identities, the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning interrogators may shed even more light on how the differentiation of various masculinities and their multiple counterparts represents a challenge to the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Buschmeyer & Lengersdorf, 2016).

Going further, this research suggests valuable insights may result in analyzing the experiences of interrogators based on identities other than gender. Only a few references have been made about race, class, ethnicity, and so forth; but all of these identities influence how interrogators perceive others and are perceived by others. Additionally, turning the lens of analysis on other professional identities, such as interpreters, intelligence analysts, or supervisors, would likely benefit our understanding of interrogation operations. Given the results of the approach used in this study, the contributions that an analysis of phenomena emerging from the intersections of these forms of identity with the predominant identity of the military institution, and of the identity-based interactions within the complex adaptive system of interrogation operations would be promising.

Women interrogators' emergence as non-threatening actors resulted from what appear to be phase transitions at critical thresholds. From this perspective, enough of the various actors participating in women interrogators' experiences adapted enough of their behaviors to cause nonlinear and unpredictable tipping points in what it means to be a women interrogator. This perspective is founded on this study's interpretation of interrogation operations as a complex adaptive system composed of diverse, interconnected, interdependent, and adaptive agents. This study does not, however, move

beyond providing this interpretation as an initial starting point for further development. Future research may find it useful and insightful to delve more deeply into this particular aspect of women interrogators' experiences, perhaps even going so far as to model its dynamics as a formal exploration of interrogation operations that may assist areas of proposed research articulated above.

### **Conclusion**

It is insufficient that the military become regendered in substance to achieve the transformation of security institutions. Military institutions must also be regendered in perception so that Elshtain's beautiful soul/just warrior narrative loses its explanatory power inside those institutions, as well as in the culture as a whole. Contributing to this goal requires a bottom-up research orientation within feminist security studies (Enloe, 1996) as a supplement to an understanding of human security that an exclusive focus on large scale institutions cannot provide (Hoogensen & Stuvøy, 2006). Higher levels of gender equality overall tend to correlate to inverse levels of international violence, armed conflict, and coercive diplomatic strategies (Kriesberg, 2007). While striking a new balance in American gender relations constitutes a project much more ambitious than continuing the gender mainstreaming women interrogators' experiences represent, a higher return on investment than that which would result from successfully regendering the military is unlikely. Shedding even a modest light on the experiences of women interrogators contributes to this goal, as well as the goal of offering women interrogators a respectful space in our public discourse.



## References

- Ahmed, L. (1992). *Women and gender in Islam: Historical roots of a modern debate*. New Haven, CT: Yale.
- Alexander, M., & Bruning, J.R. (2008). *How to break a terrorist: The U.S. interrogators who used brains, not brutality, to take down the deadliest man in Iraq*. [Kindle Edition]. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands/la frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.
- Babüroğlu, O. (1988). The vortical environment: The fifth in the Emery-Trist levels of organizational environments. *Human Relations*, 41(3), 181-210.
- Bem, S.L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press.
- Bennett, R. (2007). Endorsement by the seminar military interrogators. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 13(4), 391-92.
- Blanchard, E.M. (2003). Gender, international relations, and the development of feminist security theory. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(4), 1289-1312.
- Broadwell, P. (2012, February 22). Wanted: Women in top military roles. *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/22/wanted-more-women-in-military-roles/>

- Bumiller, E., and Shanker, T. (2013, January 23). Pentagon set to lift combat ban for women. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/24/us/pentagon-says-it-is-lifting-ban-on-women-in-combat.html>
- Burgess, M., Ferguson, N., & Hollywood, I. (2007). Rebels' perspectives of the legacy of past violence and of the current peace in post-agreement Northern Ireland: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Political Psychology*, 28(1), 69-88.
- Burguières, M.K. (1990). Feminist approaches to peace: Another step for peace studies. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 19(1), 1-18.
- Buschmeyer, A., & Lengersdorf, D. (2016). The differentiation of masculinity as a challenge for the concept of hegemonic masculinity. *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, 11(3), 190-207.
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenological and feminist theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), 519-31.
- Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories of subjection*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Buzan, B., & Hansen, L. (Eds.) (2009). *The evolution of international security studies*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Callahan, J.L. (2016). Women in a "combat, masculine-warrior" culture: The performance of emotion work. *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*. Retrieved from <https://jbam.scholasticahq.com/article/790-women-in-a-combat-masculine-warrior-culture-the-performance-of-emotion-work>
- Caldwell, R.A. (2012). *Fallgirls: Gender and the framing of torture at Abu Ghraib*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- Carter, M.J., & Fuller, C. (2015). Symbolic interactionism. *Sociopedia.isa*, 1-17.
- Chamaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chappell, B. (2015, December 3). Pentagon says women can now serve in front-line ground combat positions. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/12/03/458319524/pentagon-will-allow-women-in-frontline-ground-combat-positions>
- Chapman, A.W. (2009). *Mixed-gender basic training: The U.S. Army experience, 1973-2004*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army.
- Chapman, E., & Smith, J.A. (2002). Interpretative phenomenological analysis and the new genetics. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 7(2), 125-130.
- Church, A.T. (2006). *Review of Department of Defense detention operations and detainee interrogation techniques*. Washington, D.C., Headquarters, Dept. of Defense.
- CNN. (2013, January 14). By the numbers: Women in the U.S. military. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/24/us/military-women-glance/>

- Connell, R.W. (1998). Masculinities and globalization. *Men and Masculinities*, 1(1), 3-23.
- Cook, K.S., & Rice, E. (2006). Social exchange theory. In J. Delameter (Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* (pp. 53-76). New York, NY: Springer.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crowley, K.L. (2010). "Just a girl in the U.S. Army": *Exploring gender norms, behaviors, and social contexts that shape the experiences of female combat veterans* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database. (UMI No. 1483840)
- Decew, J.W. (1995). The combat exclusion and the role of the women in the military. *Hypatia*, 10(1), 56-73.
- Department of the Army. (1992). *Intelligence interrogation* (Army Field Manual 34-52). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Department of the Army. (2006). *Human intelligence collector operations* (Army Field Manual 2-22.3). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Department of Veterans Affairs. (2015). *Profile of Veterans: 2013*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Dorough-Lewis, J. (2015). Investing in uncertainty: Applying social science to military operations. In M. McFate & J.H. Laurence (Eds.), *Social science goes to war: The Human Terrain System in Iraq and Afghanistan* (pp. 189-213). London, UK: Hurst & Company.

- Dorough-Lewis, J. (2016). Understanding culture. In M. Dziedzic (Ed.), *Combating criminalized power structures: A toolkit* (pp. 17-28). New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Duncanson, C., & Woodward, R. (2016). Regendering the military: Theorizing women's military participation. *Security Dialogue*, 47(1), 3-21.
- Eager, P.W. (2016). *Waging gendered wars: U.S. military women in Afghanistan and Iraq*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ehrenreich, B. (2004, May 16). Feminism's assumptions uprooted. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/may/16/opinion/op-ehrenreich16>
- Eidelson, R.J. (1997). Complex adaptive systems in the behavioral and social sciences. *Review of General Psychology*, 1(1), 42-71.
- Elshtain, J.B. (1982). On beautiful souls, just warriors and feminist consciousness. *Women's Studies International Forum* 5(3/4), 341-8.
- Elshtain, J.B. (1995). *Women and war* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Elshtain, J.B. (1998). Women and war: Ten years on. *Review of International Studies*, 24(4), 447-60.
- Enloe, C. (1996). Margins, silences and bottom rungs: How to overcome the underestimation of power in the study of international relations. In S. Smith, K. Booth, & M. Zalewski (Eds.), *International theory: Positivism and beyond* (pp. 186-202). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.

- Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women's lives*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Enloe, C. (2004). *The curious feminist: Searching for women in a new age of empire*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Enloe, C. (2007). *Globalization and militarism: Feminists make the link*. Boston, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Evans, J.R., Meissner, C.A., Brandon, S.E., Russano, M.B., & Kleinman, S.M. (2010). Criminal versus HUMINT interrogations: The importance of psychological science to improving interrogative practice. *Journal of Psychiatry and Law*, 38(1-2), 215-49.
- Fairfield-Artman, P. (2010). *Narratives of female ROTC student-cadets in the postmodern university* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI No. 3434139)
- Fetterman, D.M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Freedman, E. (2003). *No turning back: The history of feminism and the future of women*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Frtiz, R. (1996). *Corporate tides: The inescapable laws of organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Furia, S.R. (2009). Military women: Navigating complicated gender boundaries in the pursuit of a career in a masculine gendered organization. In *Thinking Gender Papers, UCLA Center for the Study of Women*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California-Los Angeles.

- Fusco, C. (2008). *A field guide for female interrogators*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.
- Gaboury, J. (2009). Sexual rights as human rights: Resituating feminist analysis of sexual violence in wartime. In J. Gelb & M.L. Palley (Eds.). *Women and politics around the world: A comparative history and survey, Vol 1: Issues* (pp. 101-13). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio.
- Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.
- Godfrey, P.C. (2012). 'I was one of the better interrogators': Gender performativity, identity transformation and the female military intelligence officer in Iraq. In A. Carden-Coyne (Ed.). *Gender and conflict since 1914* (pp. 154-170). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goldstein, J.S. (2001). *War and gender*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Gonzales, W.A. (2013). *Does the U.S. Army HUMINT doctrine achieve its objectives? What have Iraq and Afghanistan taught us?* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from [http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/32827/13Mar\\_Gonzales\\_Walter.pdf](http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/32827/13Mar_Gonzales_Walter.pdf)
- Gottlieb, S. (Writer), & La Rocque, G.R. (Director). (1993). New civilian tasks for the military [Television series episode]. In D. Sagalyn (Executive Producer), *America's Defense Monitor*. Washington, DC: Center for Defense Information.
- Gould, C.C. (Ed.). (1999). *Key concepts in critical theory: Gender*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.

- Gubrium, J.F., & Holstein, J.A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Haeri, M., & Puechguirbal, N. (2010). From helplessness to agency: Examining the plurality of women's experience in armed conflict. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92(877), 103-22.
- Hall, A.T., Zinko, R., Perryman, A.A., Ferris, G.R. (2009). Organization citizenship behavior and reputation: Mediators in the relationships between accountability and job performance and satisfaction. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 15(4), 381-92.
- Harp, D., & Struckman, S. (2010). The articulation of Lynndie England to Abu Ghraib: Gender ideologies, war, and the construction of reality. *Journal of Magazine & New Media Research*, 11(2), 1-23.
- Harris, S. (2014, May 1). The military's top spy will be a woman. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/01/the-militarys-top-spy-will-be-a-woman/>
- Hausmann, C., Jonason, A., & Summers-Effler, E. (2015). Interaction ritual theory and symbolic interactionism. *Symbolic Interaction*, 34(3), 319-29.
- Hicks, M.V. (2011). *Negotiating gendered expectations: The basic social processes of women in the military* (Doctoral dissertation). Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.



- Hochwarter, W.A., Ferris, G.R., Zinko, R., Arnell, B., & James, M. (2007). Reputation as a moderator of political behavior-work outcomes relationships: A two-study investigation with convergent results. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(2), 567-76.
- Hoogensen, G, & Stuvøy, K. (2006). Gender, resistance and human security. *Security Dialogue*, 37(2), 207-28.
- Jeong, H. (2000). *Peace and conflict studies: An introduction*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Jones, A.R., & Fay, G.R. (2004). *Investigation of intelligence activities at Abu Ghraib*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Katz, N.H., & Lawyer, J.W. (1992). *Communication and conflict resolution skills*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.
- Kiesling, S.F. (2005). Homosocial desire in men's talk: Balancing and re-creating cultural discourses of masculinity. *Language in Society*, 34(5), 695-726.
- Kremmer, J. (2009). Suspended selves: Between female and the warrior bond. *InTensions Journal*, 3, 1-19.
- Kriesberg, L. (2007). *Constructive conflicts: From escalation to resolution* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kronsell, A. (2006). Methods for studying silences: Gender silences in institutions of hegemonic masculinity. In B.A. Ackerly, M. Stern, & J. True (Eds.), *Feminist methodologies for international relations* (pp. 108-28). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Levin, D.S. (2011). "You're always first a girl": Emerging adult women, gender, and sexuality in the Israeli army. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26(1), 3-29.
- Liu, Y., Ferris, G. R., Zinko, R., Perrewé, P. L., Weitz, B., & Xu, J. (2007). Dispositional antecedents and outcomes of political skill in organizations: A four-study investigation with convergence. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71(1), 146-65.
- Lobasz, J.K. (2008). The woman in peril and the ruined woman: Representations of female soldiers in the Iraq war. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 29(3), 305-34.
- Lagouranis, T., & Mikaelian, A. (2007). *Fear up harsh: An Army interrogator's dark journey through Iraq*. New York, NY: New American Library.
- Mackey, C., & Miller, G. (2004). *The interrogators: Inside the secret war against al Qaeda*. [Kindle Edition]. New York, NY: Warner Books.
- Maddox, E., & Seay, D. (2008). *Mission: Black list #1: The inside story of the search for Saddam Hussein – as told by the soldier who masterminded his capture*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Maruska, J.H. (2010). What are states hypermasculine? In L. Sjoberg (Ed.), *Gender and international security: Feminist perspectives* (pp. 235-55). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mauthner, M., Birch, M., Jessop, J., & Miller, T. (2002). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

- McGarry, R., Mythen, G., & Walklate, S. (2012). The soldier, human rights and the military covenant: A permissible state of exception? *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 16(8), 1183-1195.
- McLeod, J.D., & Lively, K.J. (2006). Social structure and personality. In J. Delameter (Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* (pp. 77-102). New York, NY: Springer.
- McPherson, J.M., & Ranger-Moore, J.R. (1991). Evolution on a dancing landscape: Organizations and networks in dynamic Blau space. *Social Forces*, 70(1), 19-42.
- Miller, J., & Page, S. (2007). *Complex adaptive systems: An introduction to computational models of social life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.
- Miller, S. (2010). *Finding direction and meaning through the military: Understanding the motivations for enlistment* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI No. 3437712)
- Mohrman, S.A., & Mohrman, A.M. (1989). The environment as an agent of change. In A.M. Mohrman (Ed.), *Large-scale organizational change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Morse, J.M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 1-19.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Murray, S.J., & Holmes, D. (2014). Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) and the ethics of body and place: Critical methodological reflections. *Human Studies*, 37(1), 15-30.

- Myers, S.L. (2009, August 19). Living and fighting alongside men, and fitting in. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/17/us/17women.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/17/us/17women.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&)
- Nahari, G., Vrij, A., & Fisher, R.P. (2012). Does the truth come out in the writing? SCAN as a lie detection tool. *Law and Human Behavior*, 36(1), 68-76.
- Oliver, K. (2007). *Women as weapons of war: Iraq, sex, and the media*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Oliver, K. (2008). Women: The secret weapon of modern warfare? *Hypatia*, 23(2), 1-16.
- Parashar, S. (2010). Women, militancy, and security: The South Asian conundrum. In L. Sjoberg (Ed.), *Gender and international security* (pp. 168-87). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Perinbanayagam, R.S. (1985). *Signifying acts: Structures and meaning in everyday life*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University.
- Peterson, V.S. (2010). Gendered identities, ideologies, and practices in the context of war of militarism. In L. Sjoberg & S. Via (Eds.), *Gender, war, and militarism: Feminist perspectives* (pp. 17-29). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Petraeus, D.H. (2008). Multi-National Force – Iraq commander’s counterinsurgency guidance. *Military Review*, 2-4.
- Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J.A. (2014). A practical guide to using interpretative phenomenological analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne – Psychological Journal*, 20(1), 7-14.

- Poland, B.D. (2002). Transcription quality. In J. Gubrium & J. Holsten (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 629-50). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.
- Prutow, E. (2011). *Sex as a weapon: The war on terror and just war theory* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from [https://shareok.org/bitstream/handle/11244/11179/Prutow\\_okstate\\_0664M\\_12955.pdf](https://shareok.org/bitstream/handle/11244/11179/Prutow_okstate_0664M_12955.pdf)
- Rapley, T. (2007). *Doing conversation, discourse, and document analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.
- Rees, T. (2002). The politics of 'mainstreaming' gender equality. In E. Breitenbach, A. Brown, F. Mackay, & J. Webb (Eds.), *The changing politics of gender equality in Britain* (pp. 45-69). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
- Rees, T. (2005) Reflections on the uneven development of gender mainstreaming in Europe. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7(4), 555–74.
- Repo, J. (2006). *Gendering the militarization of the war on terrorism: Discourses and representations of masculinities and femininities* (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from <http://ethesis.helsinki.fi/julkaisut/val/yleis/pg/repo/genderin.pdf>
- Richter-Montpetit, M. (2016). Militarized masculinities, women torturers, and the limits of gender analysis at Abu Ghraib. In A.T.R. Wibben (Ed.), *Research war: Feminist methods, ethics, and politics* (pp. 92-116). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Riffle, J.A. (2014). *Corpsman up: The lived experience of PTSD in Navy hospital corpsman who have served in combat with Marine Corps units in Iraq and/or Afghanistan* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3645141)
- Ritchie, E.C., & Naclerio, A.L. (Eds.). (2015). *Women at war*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ritzer, G. (2008). *Sociological theory* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Rodham, K., Fox, F., & Doran, N. (2015). Exploring analytical trustworthiness and the process of reaching consensus in interpretative phenomenological analysis: Lost in transcription. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(1), 59-71.
- Roulo, C. (2013, January 24). Defense Department expands women's combat roles. *American Forces Press Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=119098>
- Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal thinking: Toward a politics of peace*. New York, NY: Ballantine.
- Rumann, C. (2010). Use of female interrogators: The analysis of sexualized interrogations the detainee interrogation working group did not conduct. *Hastings Women's Law Journal*, 21(2). 273-310.
- Ryan, D. M. (2008). *In their place: Measuring gender attitudes and egalitarianism among U.S. Army personnel* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3306634)

- Rzechowka, M. (2010). Gender integration and modern military forces: A comparative analysis. *The Canadian Army Journal*, 13(2), 70-89.
- Sapir, A. (2005). *The LSI course on scientific content analysis (SCAN)*. Phoenix, AZ: Laboratory for Scientific Interrogation.
- Sasson-Levy, O., Levy, Y., & Lomsky-Feder, E. (2011). Women breaking the silence: Military service, gender, and antiwar protest. *Gender & Society*, 25(6), 740-763.
- Schein, E.H. (1998). *Process consultation: Its role in organization development, vol. 1* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Schmidt, R., & Furlow, J. (2005). *Investigation into FBI allegations of detainee abuse at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Detention Facility*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Silva, J.M. (2008). A new generation of women? How female ROTC cadets negotiate the tension between masculine military culture and traditional femininity. *Social Forces*, 82(2), 937-60.
- Silverman, D. (1970). *The theory of organizations*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Sjoberg, L. (Ed.). (2010a). *Gender and international security: Feminist perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sjoberg, L. (2010b). Women fighters and the 'beautiful soul' narrative. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92(877), 53-68.
- Sjoberg, L. (2010c). Gendering the empire's soldiers: Gender ideologies, the U.S. military, and the "War on Terror". In L. Sjoberg & S. Via (Eds.), *Gender, war, and militarism: Feminist perspectives* (pp. 209-18). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

- Sjoberg, L., & Gentry, C.E. (2007). *Mothers, monsters, whores: Women's violence in global politics*. New York, NY: Zed Books.
- Sjoberg, L., & Martin, J. (2007). Feminist security studies: Conversations and introductions. *International Studies Association Compendium Project*. Retrieved from <http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/files/ieKk5G/Laura%20Sjoberg%20Jillian%20Martin%20Compendium%20Contribution.pdf>
- Sjoberg, L., & Tickner, J.A. (2011). *Feminism and international relations: Conversations about the past, present and future*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Solnit, R. (2014). *Men explain things to me*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Smith, J.A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1(1), 39-54.
- Smith, J.A. (2011). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Health Psychology Review*, 5(1), 9-27.
- Smith, J.A., & Eatough, V. (2007). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In E. Lyons & A. Coyne (Eds.), *Analyzing qualitative data in psychology* (pp. 35-51). London, UK: Sage.
- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2010). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.



- Smith, J.A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J.A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative methods: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 51-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spelman, E.V. (1999). Selection 16: From inessential woman. In C.C. Gould (Ed.), *Key concepts in critical theory: Gender* (pp. 148-54). Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.
- Spivak, M.S. (2016). Women in combat. *CQ Researcher*, 26(19), 435-50.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stern, M., & Wibben, A.T.R., (2014). A decade of feminist security studies revisited. *Virtual Collection on Feminist Security Studies from Security Dialogue*. Retrieved from <http://sdi.sagepub.com/site/Virtualspecialissues/GenderStudies.xhtml>
- Stryker, S. (1987). The vitalization of symbolic interactionism. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 50(1), 83-94.
- Sylvester, C. (1987). Some dangers in merging feminist and peace projects. *Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance*, 12(4), 493-509.
- Sylvester, C. (2010). Tensions in feminist security studies. *Security Dialogue*, 41(6), 607-14.
- Taber, N. (2011). 'You better not get pregnant while you're here': tensions between masculinities and femininities in military communities of practice. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 30(3), 331-48.

- Tan, M. (2015, October 16). 3rd woman, and 1st female Reservist, dons Ranger tab. *Army Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/10/16/3rd-woman-and-1st-female-reservist-dons-ranger-tab/74070360/>
- Tan, M. (2016, April 16). Meet the Army's first female infantry officer. *Army Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/officer/2016/04/27/meet-armys-first-female-infantry-officer/83591066/>
- Taw, J.M. (2012). *Mission revolution: The U.S. military and stability operations*. New York, NY: Columbia University.
- Thacker, T.L. (2006). *Interrogation: Is the US Army equipped and trained to meet the present challenges in today's contemporary operational environment?* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from [www.soc.mil/SWCS/SWEG/AY\\_2006/Thacker,%20T%202006.pdf](http://www.soc.mil/SWCS/SWEG/AY_2006/Thacker,%20T%202006.pdf)
- Tickner, J.A., & Sjoberg, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Feminism and international relations: Conversations about the past, present, and future*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Titunik, R.F. (2009). Are we all torturers now? A reconsideration of women's violence at Abu Ghraib. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 22(2), 257-77.
- Tobia, P.J. (2015, December 3). Defense Secretary Carter opens all combat jobs to women. *PBS Newshour*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/watch-live-defense-secretary-carter-to-lift-ban-on-women-in-combat-jobs/>

- Tsukayama, J.K. (2014). *By any means necessary: An interpretive phenomenological analysis study of post 9/11 American abusive violence in Iraq* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. U637342)
- Ury, W.L., Brett, J.M., & Goldberg, S.B. (1988). *Getting disputes resolved: Designing systems to cut the costs of conflict*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Walby, S. (2005) Gender mainstreaming: Productive tensions in theory and practice. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 12(3), 321–43.
- Wilcox, L. (2010). Gendering the cult of the offensive. In L. Sjoberg (Ed.), *Gender and international security* (pp. 61-82). New York, NY: Routledge.

## Appendix A: Interview Questions

RQ1A. Was there ever a time when you were engaged in interrogation operations and you felt very aware of the fact that you are a woman? If so, would you tell me about that experience?

RQ1B. Did you ever have a time when you felt being a woman interrogator was a challenge? If so, how did you deal with the situation?

RQ1C. Did you ever have a time when you felt being a woman interrogator was a force multiplier? If so, how?

RQ1D. Did you ever feel like the process of becoming an interrogator – such as your initial training, early field experiences, or mentorship later in your career – was different for you because you were a woman? If so, how do you think they could have been handled differently?

RQ2A. What does being a “women interrogator” mean to you personally?

RQ2B. Did your being a woman affect your relationships with other military interrogators with whom you worked regularly? If so, how?

RQ2C. Did your being a woman affect your relationships with interrogators from other organizations with whom you did not work regularly?

RQ2D. Did you receive any advice or cautions related to your being a woman when you were going into this job? If so, how did you experience pair with that advice or those cautions?

RQ2E. Knowing what you know now, what advice or cautions would you give to a young woman getting ready to become an interrogator herself?